



THOUGHTS & IMAGES

ALBEDO

NR. 12
\$2.00

ANTHROPOMORPHICS

CAN. \$2.50



Floating stuff issue

Hi! This is the unfortunate low budget version because the orders fell off to below break-even issue. The cover was originally done for the Rustycon science-fiction convention program book. It was printed along with the cover for **Albedo** Nr. 11, so we had about 11,000 copies, of which only 800 or so were used for the book. I didn't know quite what to do with the remainder until I found out that the orders for Nr. 12 had fallen about a third from Nr. 11. With such low numbers, **Albedo** wouldn't pay for its printing, even less have any money left over for the contributors. So instead of printing a set of covers using Rick Sternbach's photo composition, I'm resorting to recycling the old one. His swell cover will have to wait until issue 14. While visiting Rick in L.A. I wrote and penciled **Fusion** nr. 9, wrote a movie outline, and brainstormed several future publishing projects. Busy me. The main one is Vicky Wyman's **Xanadu**, which is still going strong for a May release. The first issue is effectively done, and I saw the really fab pencils for the second issue. While there will be a "for mature readers" notice on the cover, it's only to warn that there is some slight nudity and suggestion of sexual situations, but it is NOT another **Omaha**. (While I think **Omaha** is an excellent book, there are those who have problems with the intimate scenes.) There was also talk of me writing a story for a future mini-series based in the **Xanadu** world. Though not done in depth, further consideration was made toward a *Homo Cetacea* story or stories, and restarting a comic strip, called *Sounds*, which I had done some work on years ago. Back here in Seattle, the daring decision was made to go ahead with Donna Barr's **The Desert Peach**. It's a rather silly-fun story about the Desert Fox's rather "sweet" half-brother, as he minces his way across North Africa, in search of a nice place for a little picnic. It is tentatively going to be a bi-monthly, starting in June. Also decided to not go forward with **Adventure Tails**. That means that this will be the last episode of *Rufus the Red* for the time being. What all happened was that I was worrying about the weak condition of the B&W comics market, with orders for just about everyone's book falling off badly and all. Monika Livingston, frustrated by my on again, off again plans for **Tails**, and understandingly unwilling to commit to several months worth of work which might well be for naught if there were not enough orders to print the book, decided to go and end *Rufus* for the time being. She does want to go ahead on **Zell Sworddancer**, and the long awaited second issue should be out this summer and onto a bi-monthly schedule.

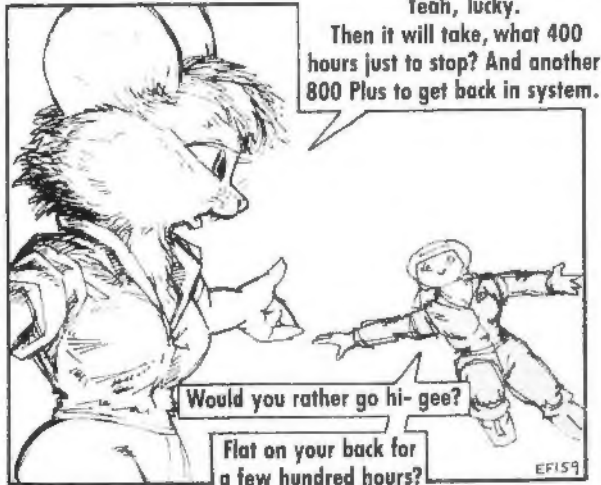
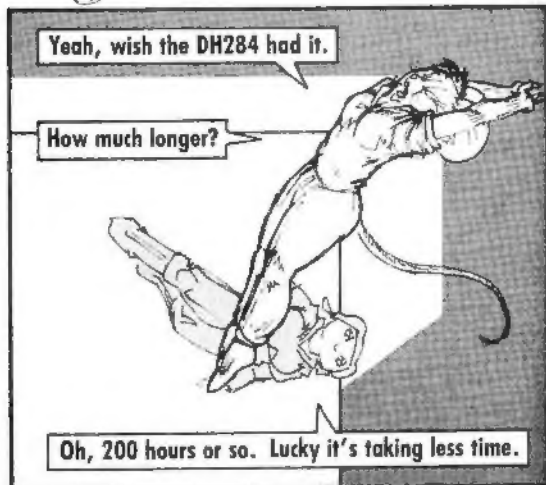
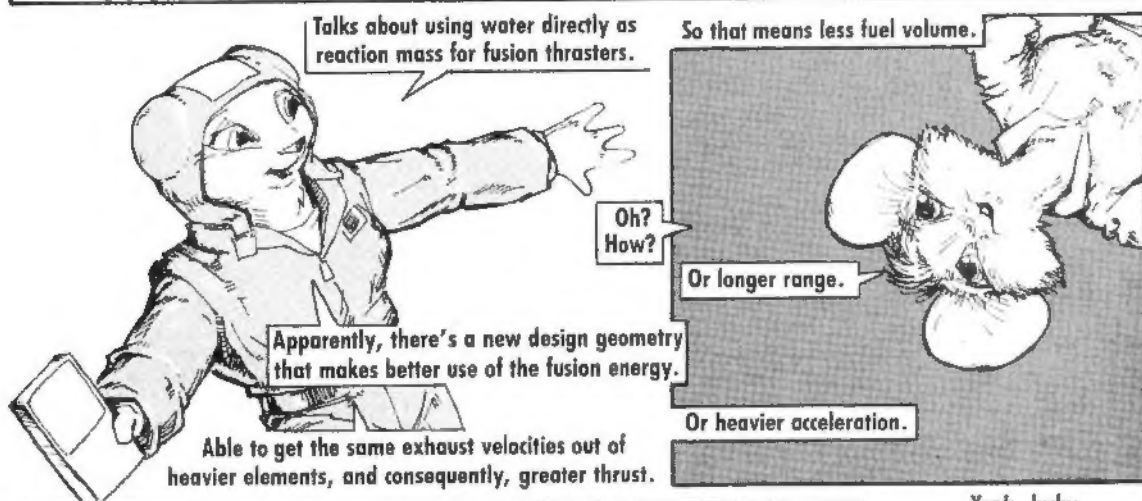
Matt Howarth is arranging art for a collected *Konny and Czu* book to come out this summer. It will include the *Harvest* episodes from **Albedo**, plus the mini-comic story *Dips*. At this point, it will not include *Konny* and *Czu*'s first full length appearance, **The Hoobi Yaps Artifact**, a Howski Studios publication which is still available. (I have some copies, \$2 plus \$1 postage. It's 8½ x 11, 24 pages, and banned on Mars!) The collected *Konny* and *Czu* will probably be 48 pages, and due out this summer. As for **Albedo**, itself, the new look *Erma* continues, and this episode should stir some reader reaction, and begin to answer some questions while raising new ones.

To answer a point brought up in nr. 10, the Net, specifically that part which functions as an autonomous entity, is more or less a single individual, duplicated innumerable times in the processor nets of ships and whole planetary systems throughout known space. Each part is a complete and, if need be, independent intelligence, but keeps updated and in harmony with its fellow parts through the various communications channels, mostly piggy-backing on message torpedo programs and in courier vessels. And so, is usually no more than a few weeks out of date with the collective opinion of the rest. The other question, brought up from nr. 11, is who is Toki, specifically, is she related to the spacer Toki in *Birthingright II*? Yes, the *Birthingright* Toki is a direct descendant of *Erma*'s Toki. Also, she won't be the only one with offspring spanning the century between *Erma* and *Birthingright*. Thinking of such, yes, I do intend to do a *Birthingright III*.

With all these busy things going on, it's clear I can't be creative and manage the business at the same time. And to help, Doug Dubrow, Monika Livingston's husband, is now the General Manager. He'll take care of subscriptions, distributors, consumer complaints, and all the fun bits of being a publishing business. He already acts an artist's agent for Monika and other Northwest artists at convention artshows and the like with his Nebula Circle Productions, so is experienced with fannish interfacing. This means, of course, that all the reader mail goes to him. The only thing I'll handle is my own personal correspondence. Everything else, including *Erma* page orders, back-issue inquiries, submissions of artwork, and all the regular stuff should be sent to Doug. Okay?

Which, at this point, reminds me, that there's all manner of neat stuff coming up in the way of new ancillary merchandise. The *Erma* and *H. Cetacea* cloisonne pins are now joined by **Xanadu**, **Fusion** and **Dreamery** pins, courtesy of **LX Limited**. I'll have finally gotten some more **Albedo** and *Erma* t-shirts printed up, as well as a new *Konny and Czu* design, and probably others. Since a lot of this is still in the works as I get ready for press, sending a SASE to Doug can get you an up-to-date listing of what's available.

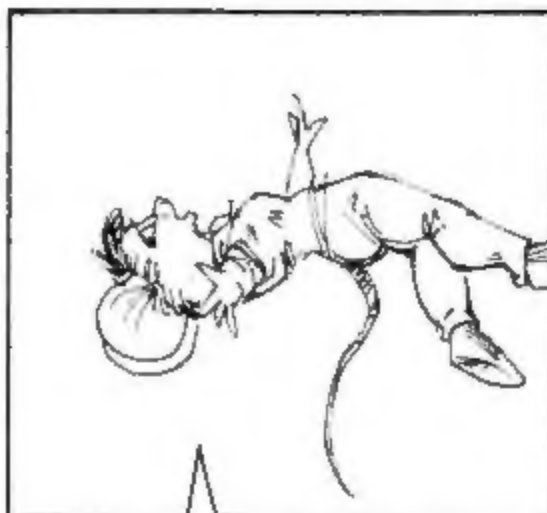
COMMANDER ERMA FELNA HAS BEEN CO-ASSIGNED, WITH COMMANDER TOKI ZHA, TO HEAD A SQUADRON OF THE 10TH AEROSPACE DEFENSE WING AT AHAHN-TAKO, WHICH HAS WARRING CIVIL FACTIONS. TOKI WAS AN OLD SCHOOLMATE OF ERMA'S, AND WOULD TAKE ON THE ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS, WHILE ERMA WOULD FLY AND PROVIDE COMBAT COMMAND. ENROUTE TO AHAHN-TAKO, THE COMMERCIAL LINER THEY ARE ON IS ATTACKED BY ACVS, ROBOT MISSILES, SUSPECTED TO HAVE BEEN LAUNCHED BY THE BELLIGERENTS. THE SHIP IS SERIOUSLY DAMAGED, BUT THE PASSENGERS AND CREW ARE LARGELY UNHARMED AND NOW AWAIT RESCUE AS IT DRIFTS ALONG.



Well — with the right company — .



Ooooh, that second officer?



Oh no. He's worse than you.
A hopeless romantic, searching
for his one great love.
And he isn't even Dornthantii.

What's that supposed to mean?



You know. You and your
great passions. All that
poetry and silly
sentimentality.

Me?



Not you, you dull stone,
you Dornthantii. Half the
net's full of your musing.

Maybe it makes up for your bloodthirstiness.



We're more philosophical.

And so, when did you start noticing things
that weren't purely business or pleasure?



Whatever could you mean?

Well — .

Actually, been thinking —
for a change.



Ah, getting old.

About life, the universe,
and everything.

You!! No, ya know.
About settling down.
Contributing to the future,
that sort of thing.



Oh — so you want babies.

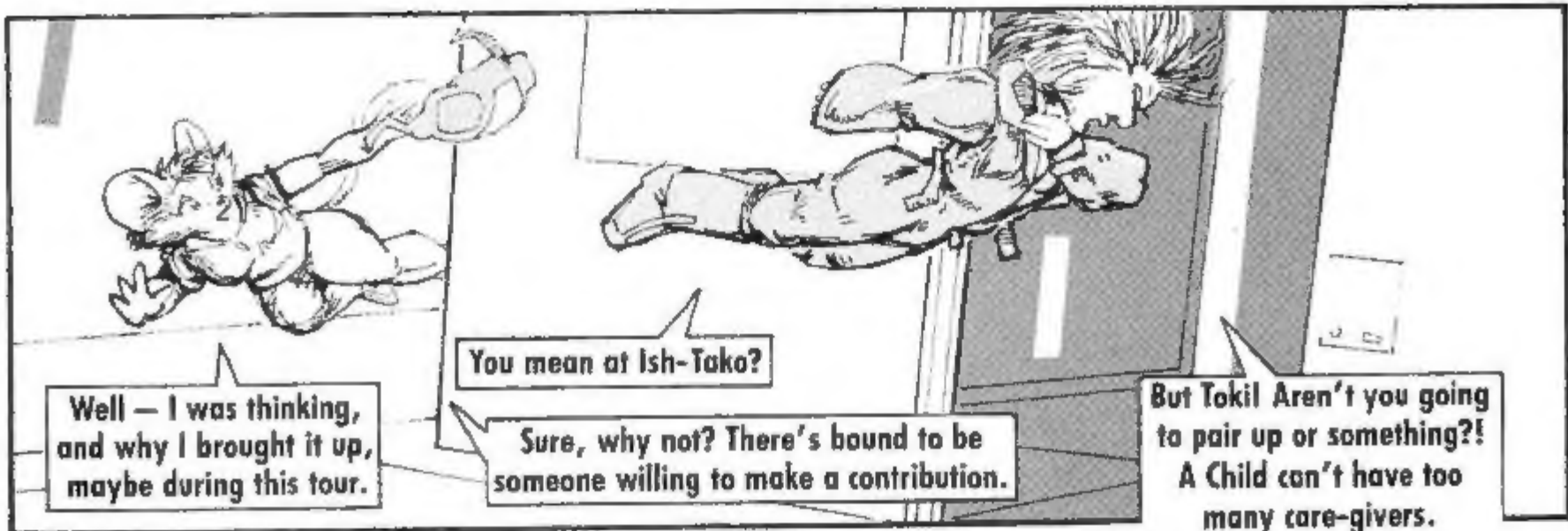
Well, eventually.

That's fine. I had you half-figured
to go domestic. Got any timetable?



Erma! You just don't
schedule these things!

Oh? You don't?

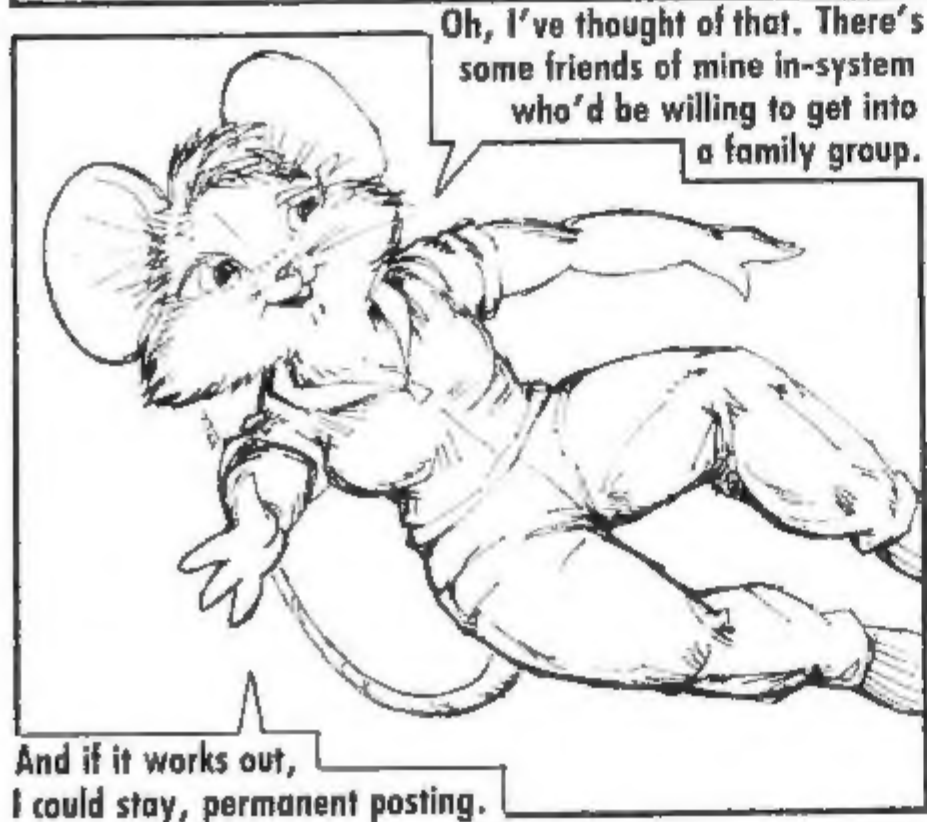


Well — I was thinking, and why I brought it up, maybe during this tour.

You mean at Ish-Tako?

Sure, why not? There's bound to be someone willing to make a contribution.

But Tokil Aren't you going to pair up or something?! A Child can't have too many care-givers.

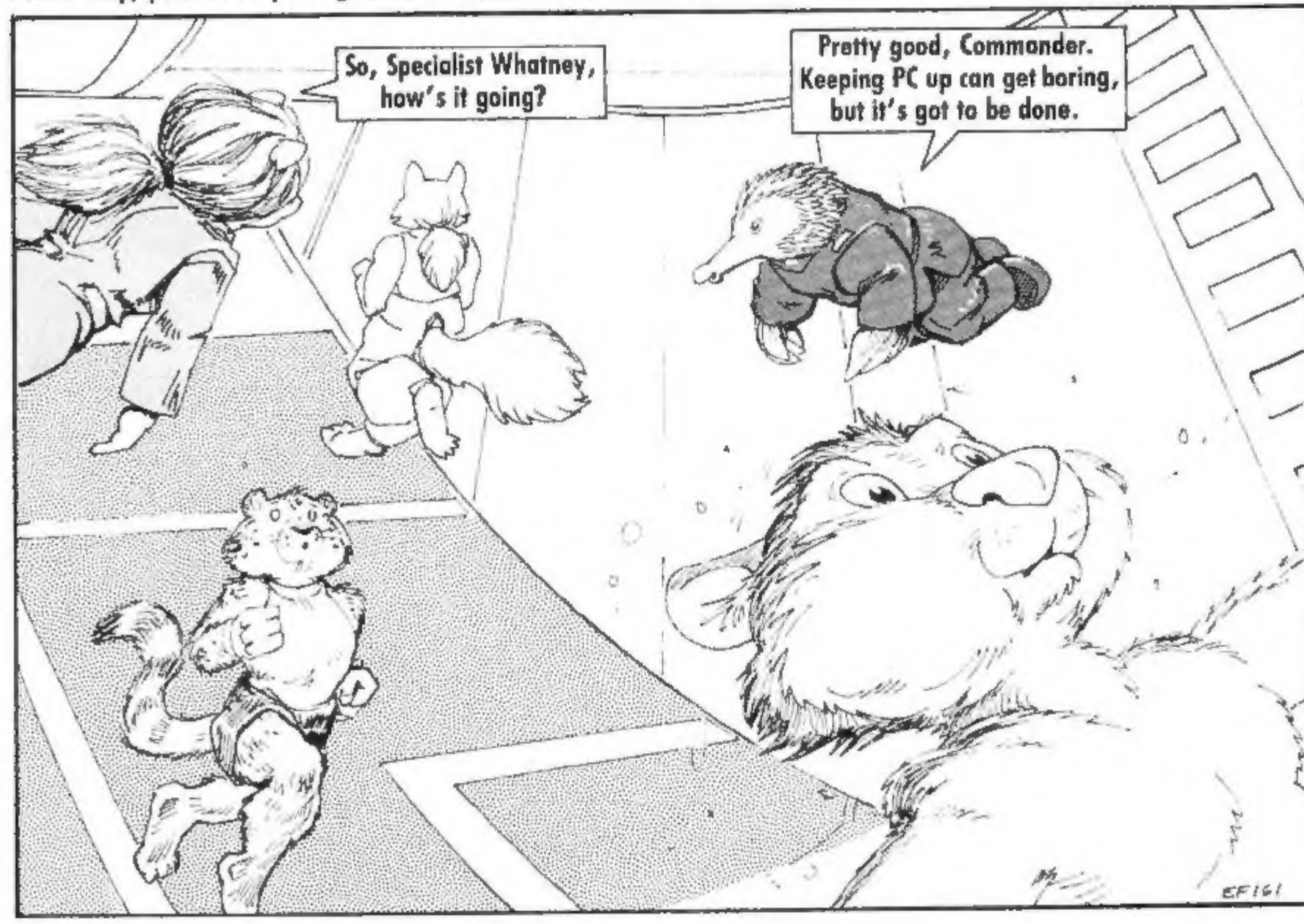


Oh, I've thought of that. There's some friends of mine in-system who'd be willing to get into a family group.

And if it works out, I could stay, permanent posting.

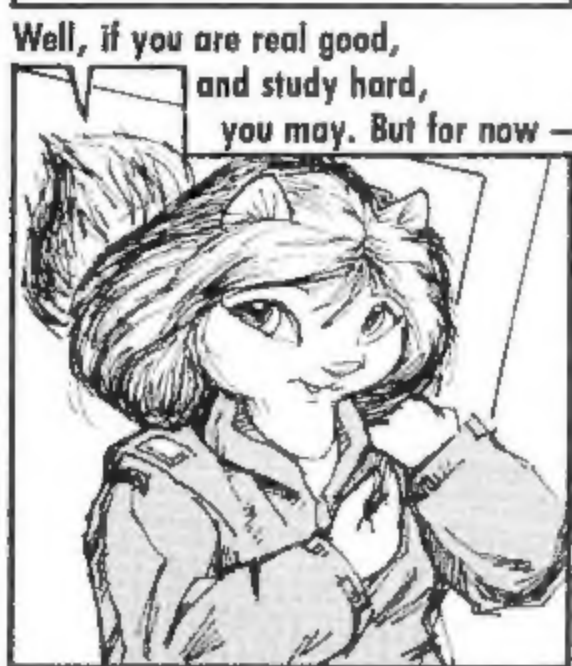
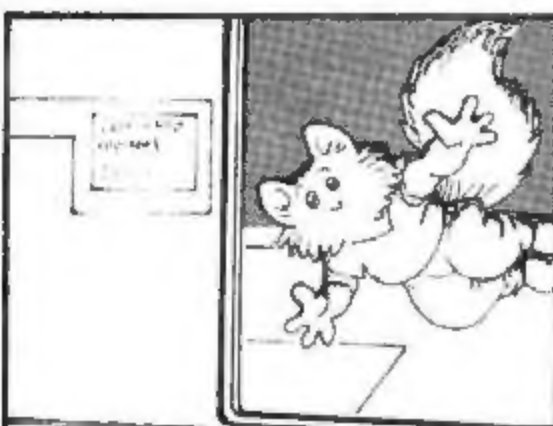
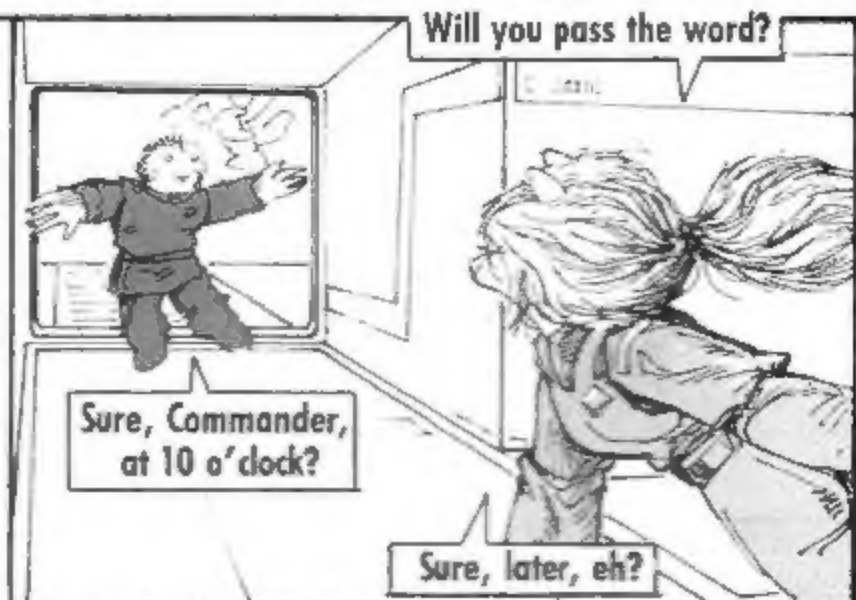


you'll need at least 50 laps, and watch out for those going the opposite direction.

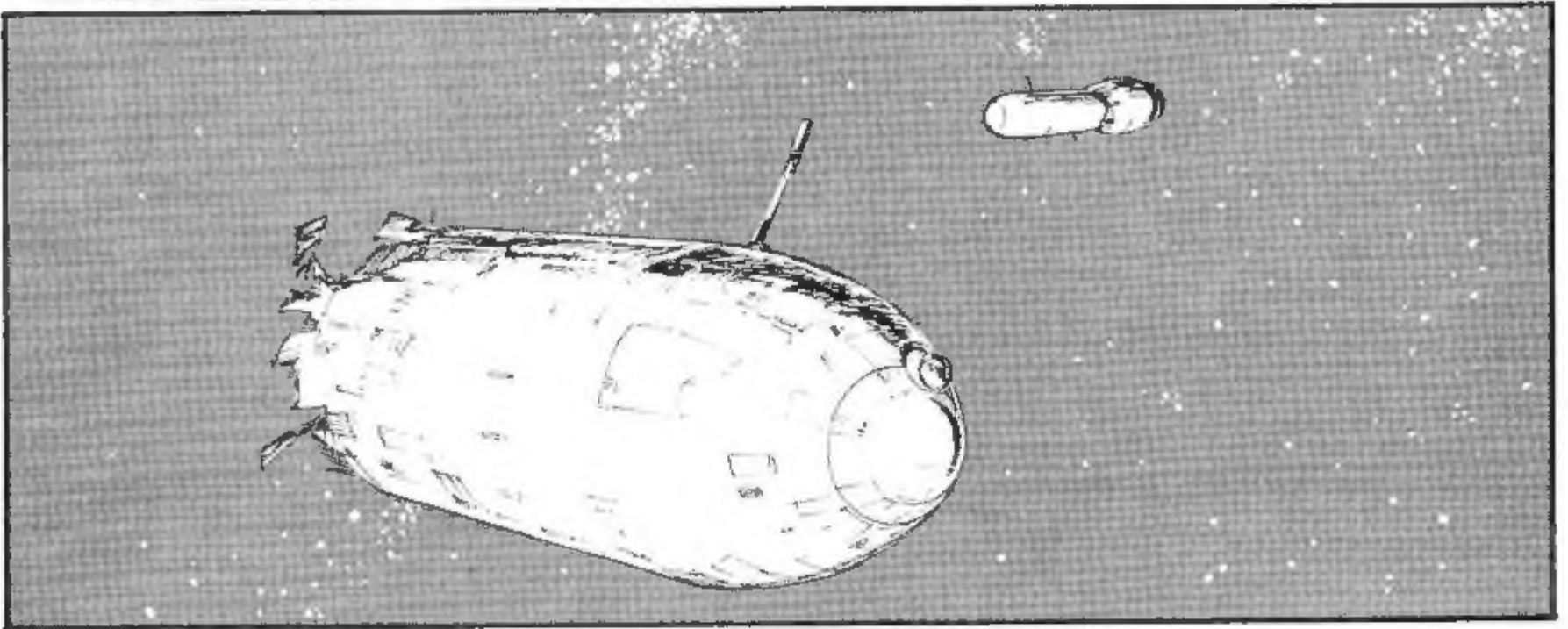


So, Specialist Whatney, how's it going?

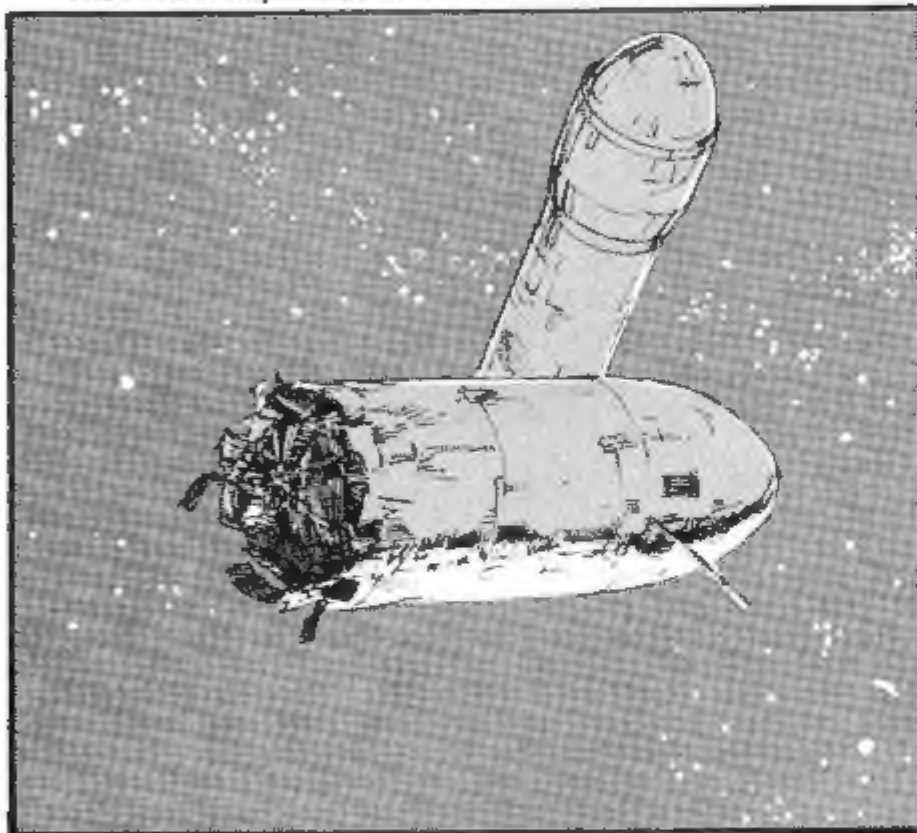
Pretty good, Commander. Keeping PC up can get boring, but it's got to be done.



THE DH284 RENDEZVOUS WITH THE CRIPPLED SPACE LINER ON SCHEDULE, MUCH TO THE RELIEF OF THE PASSENGERS.



THE PASSENGERS AND CREW ARE TRANSFERRED OVER TO THE FAST FRIGATE, WHILE ENGINEERS SURVEY THE DAMAGE.

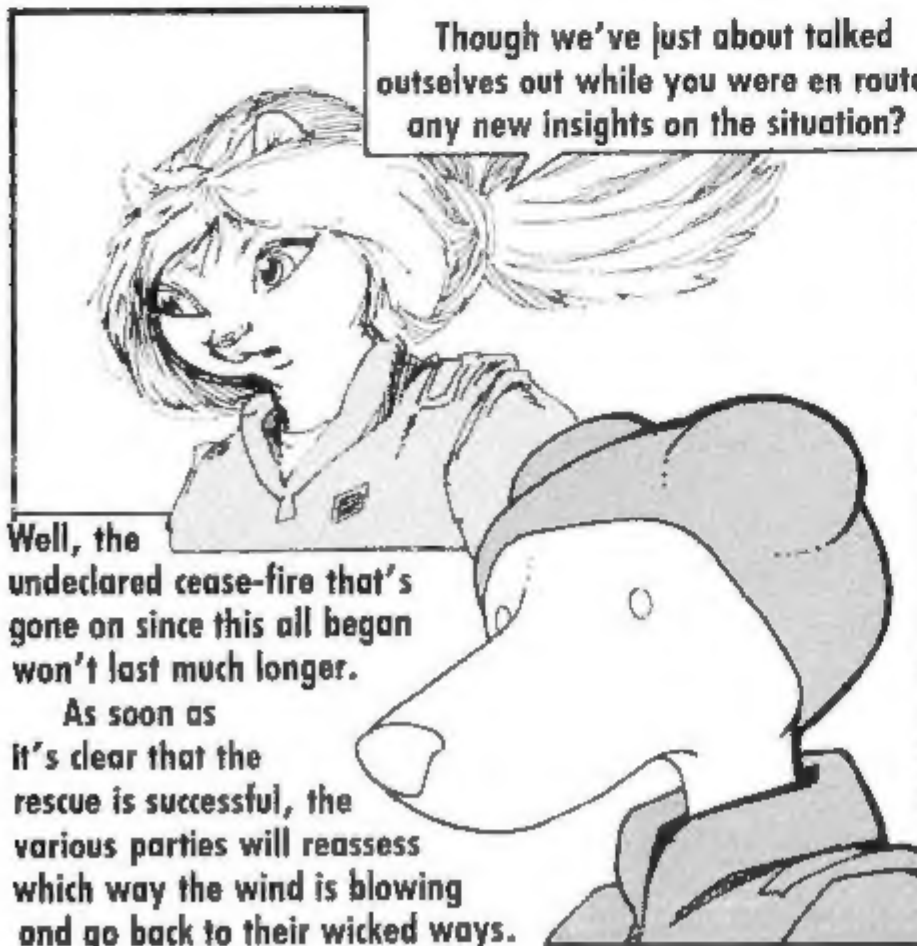


Commander Felna, I'm Mission Commander Wooni, pleased to meet you, even in these circumstances.



And you, Commander.

Though we've just about talked ourselves out while you were en route, any new insights on the situation?



Well, the undeclared cease-fire that's gone on since this all began won't last much longer.

As soon as it's clear that the rescue is successful, the various parties will reassess which way the wind is blowing and go back to their wicked ways.

Any new speculation on how this will impact my role?



As I earlier observed, I don't know your squadron personally, but would expect a fair moral boost. They are all EDF regulars, mostly out of Danet or Wanta. Should be a good crew. More generally, given your well-publicized record, friend and foe will consider your presence a signal of strengthened EDF resolve.



I don't see how I'm going to do so much.

Well, until this incident, the action has been artificially restrained.

And worse, action and reaction have been measured against the limits or disadvantages of EDF forces, making our presence pointedly ineffectual.



Bringing in new key officers means a possible change in the game.

Attacking the liner could have been an intended pre-emption. But at the same time, it caused a lot of unfavorable reactions, mainly in expanding the area of conflict and imperiling unaligned civilians and all. There's been shake-ups, and the hardliners are probably getting desperate. Every inaction with the cease-fire allows cooler heads to sway the moderates. So don't be surprised if we get some major action.



Uhhh — is the system fully "netted"?

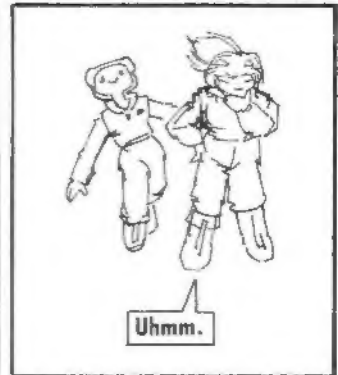
No, just the major population centers on a couple of the planets.



Oh, really? Nothing in the hostile areas?

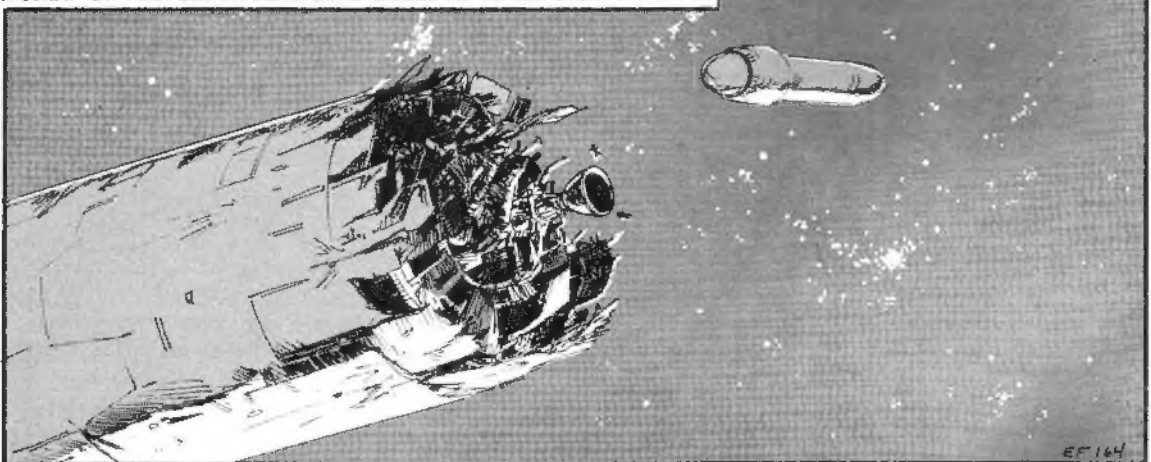


'Fraid not. They disconnected years ago.



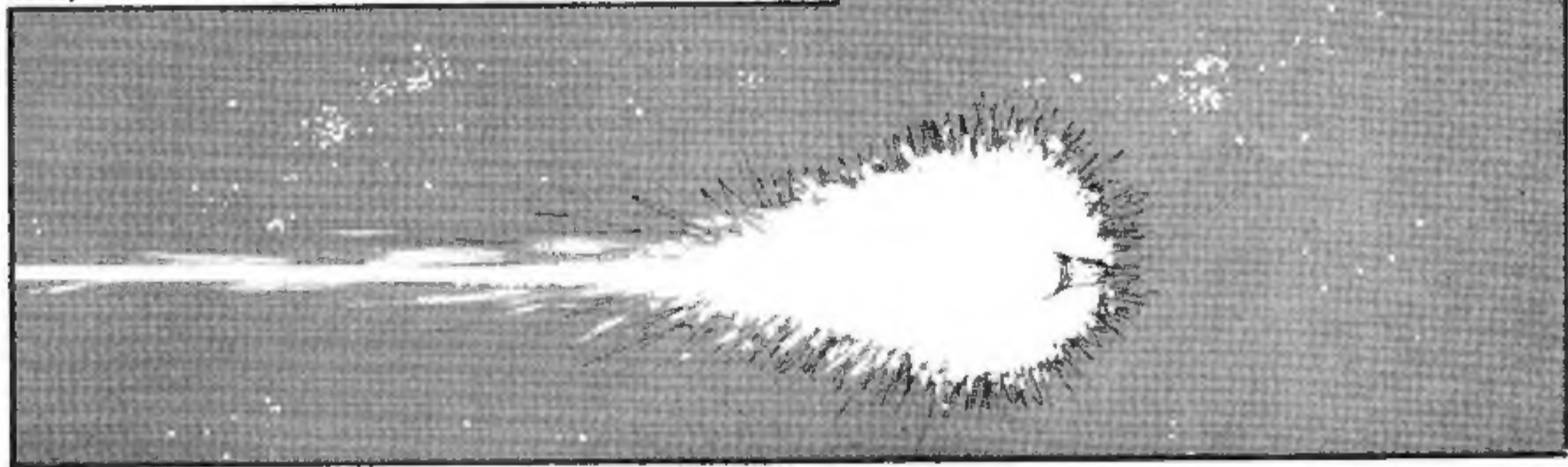
Uhhh.

A STRAP-ON PROPULSION REACTOR IS RIGGED UP TO THE DAMAGED HULL.



IT, AND A ROBOT MAINTENANCE TEAM, WILL SLOWLY DECELERATE AND, EVENTUALLY RETURN THE SHIP TO AHAHN-TAKO.

THEN, THE DH284 BEGINS ITS OWN DECELERATION MANEUVERS.



Oh — argh — gees again.

I feel like I weigh a ton.

I guess we should
get re-conditioned.

No no no!
We'll get back to zee gee,
anything but this.

Groans.

I'm going to get something
to eat. Want anything?

No blaugh !

Clam cakes again?

Eat 'em before
they get damp.

Oh, Mom!

Well, Commander, now that
we're heading back in, looking
forward to your assignment?

I'm sorry, Dad,
but everything's
gotten so heavy!

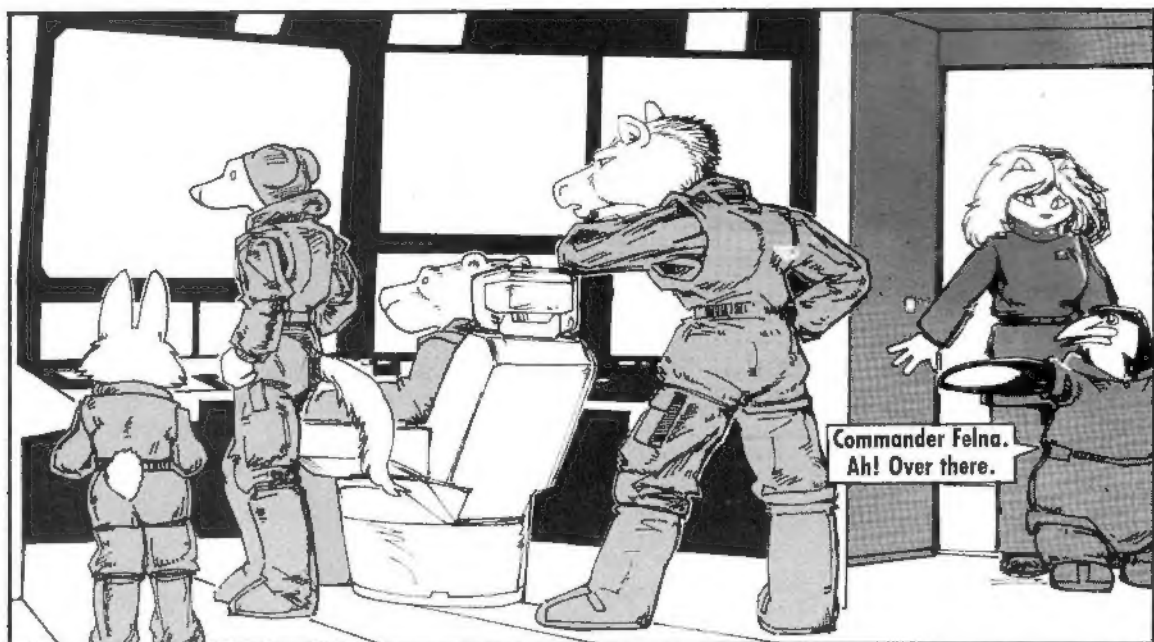
Well, except for the circumstances,
yes. Having an active squadron
to fly with. That's all I really
want to do. And you?

I hope your spouse's enthusiasm
hasn't been dampened by — .

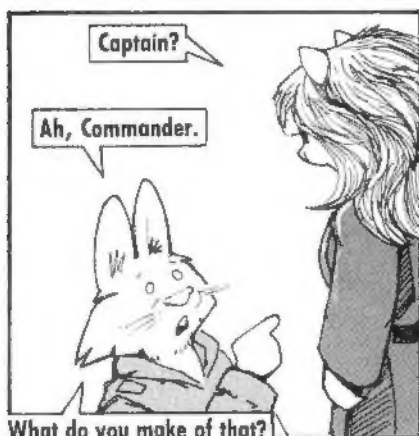
Excuse me, Felna.

Oh — I look forward to any assignment as an adventure.
My family has always been bureaucrats and for me to go
off and be an EDF officer is an experience for us all.

Report to Control, ASAP!



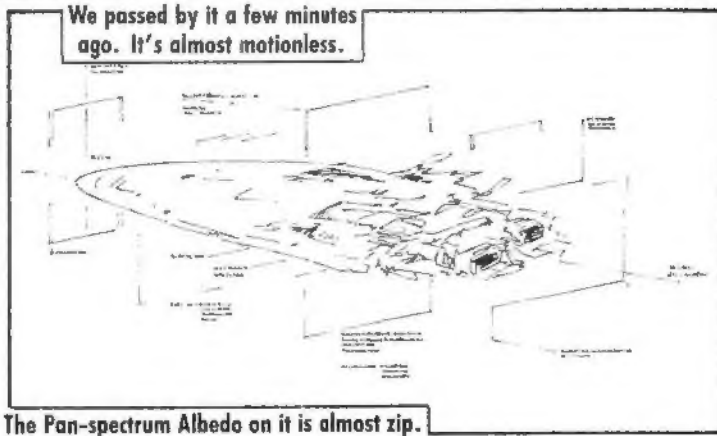
Commander Felna.
Ah! Over there.



Captain?

Ah, Commander.

What do you make of that?



We passed by it a few minutes ago. It's almost motionless.

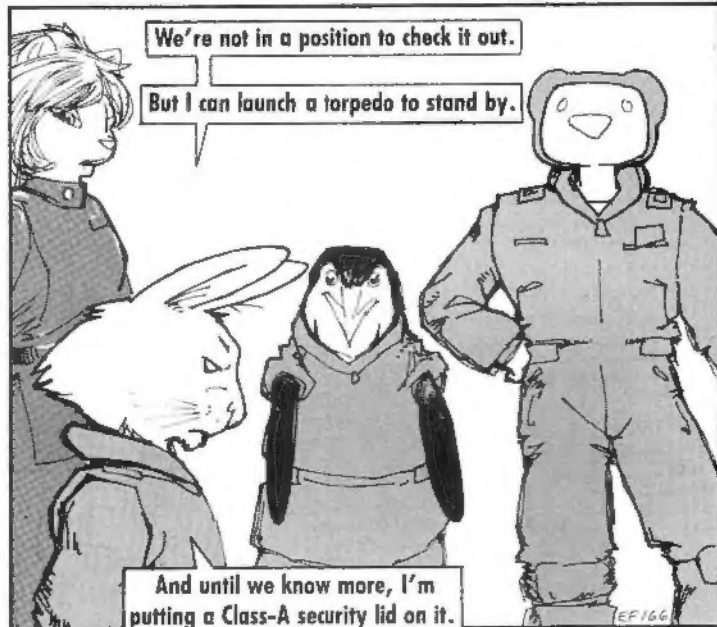
The Pan-spectrum Albedo on it is almost zip.



Could it be?

I don't know.

It's an unknown configuration.
And what little we can detect doesn't
give us a clue as to materials.



We're not in a position to check it out.

But I can launch a torpedo to stand by.

And until we know more, I'm
putting a Class-A security lid on it.

EF166



ABOUT THE DERELICT?

DON'T KNOW, BUT INITIAL TRAJECTORY ANALYSIS SUGGESTS THAT IT COULD HAVE BEEN OUT HERE FOR A COUPLE HUNDRED YEARS.

NO MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE. OTHER THAN WE'VE BEEN IN EXISTANCE FOR ABOUT TWO HUNDRED YEARS. BUT HAVE NO EVIDENCE OF EARLIER HABITATION OR ORIGIN OF THE BIOLOGY.

YES

Of course.
Is it the Creators?

What do you know
about the Creators?

Have you been
around since the
awakening?



What do you think
about the security lid?

UNTIL THE VESSEL'S ORIGIN CAN BE DETERMINED,
AND THE POTENTIAL IMPACT ASSESSED,
MAINTAINING SECRECY WOULD BE PRUDENT.

And if it's the
Creators?

— — —

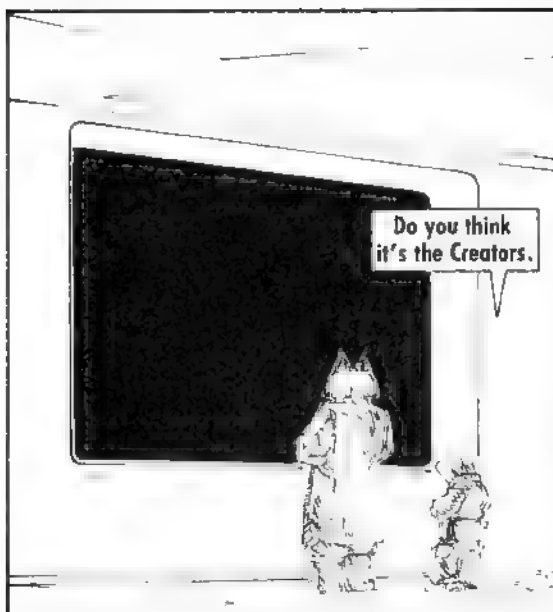
ONE MONTH LATER, ON BOARD THE DH112.

I've trained my
whole life for this.

Anticipating arrival, ma'am.

Oh, yes.





Do you think it's the Creators.



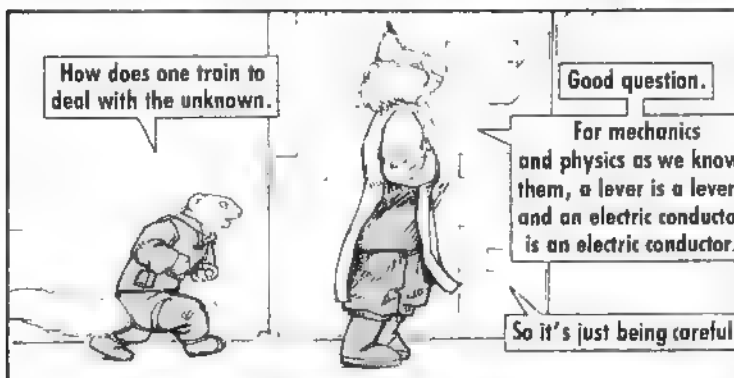
I really don't know.

Could be.

Or aliens?

Or a secret ILR effort?

That's why I'm here.

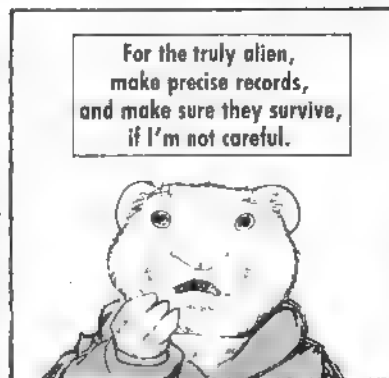


How does one train to deal with the unknown.

Good question.

For mechanics and physics as we know them, a lever is a lever, and an electric conductor is an electric conductor.

So it's just being careful.



For the truly alien, make precise records, and make sure they survive, if I'm not careful.



So, what are we going to do?

I thought the protocols that we've already reviewed have conceded all that.

No no no! He's right! The protocols are all well and good, if this was an academic exercise.

Come on you guys. You're just all impatient to just jump right in!

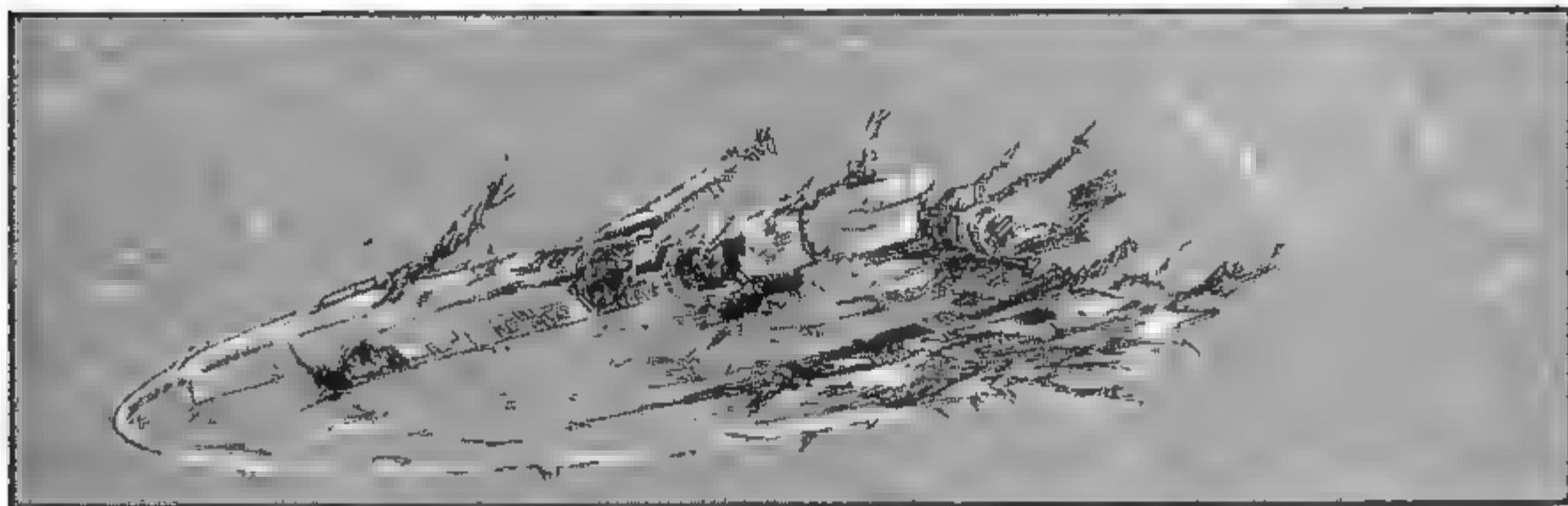
What do you think, Ed?
I think Bob's right.

I dunno, what do you think, Wally?
I think you're right.



All right, all right.
I'll concede the first steps.
Stand off, send a robot in
with a fiber-optic link.
But then, if nothing
comes out to bite us.
I want to be there
ASAP.

I can accept that, only if you give me enough time to see
whether or not there is something in there to "bite" you.



Not much more can we see from out here. The
undamaged portions have an
extremely effective low reflective surface.

The DH284 was lucky to spot it.

The damaged area is hardly better, probably
some light element composite, I'd guess.

It's all dead cold.
No EM.
No particle radiation.

From the pattern of damage,
I'd guess kinetic,
several time-spaced impacts.

Once we get materials samples,
we'll figure performance and get
an idea as to what happened.



A ROBOT PROBE MAKES AN EXTENSIVE EXTERNAL SURVEY.



THEN IT TAKES SMALL, CAUTIOUS SAMPLES.



Well?

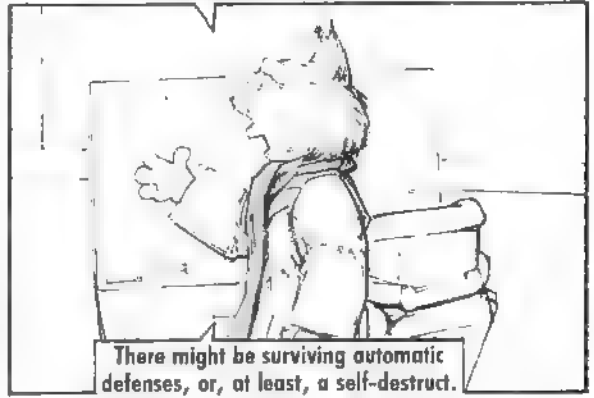
I'm thinking,
I'm thinking.

Ya know, other than the
advanced construction and materials,
it isn't so different from our
own design. So, because of its age,
my guess is that it's the Creators.



Wait! Let's not make any conclusions!
It may well be a Creator artifact,
but that doesn't make it any less hazardous.

It's a badly damaged ship. There could be volatiles, even
explosives. Moreover, there are what appear to be turrets,
maybe sensors, maybe weapons.



There might be surviving automatic
defenses, or, at least, a self-destruct.



A point well taken. I'll admit, I was
a bit over-enthusiastic at first. But
now that I've been staring at it for
a few days — . I'm going to have
to agree with you on going slow.
Just in those details of materials
technology that we can see, the
artifact is invaluable. Who knows
what we might yet find inside and
jeopardize in a moment's incaution.



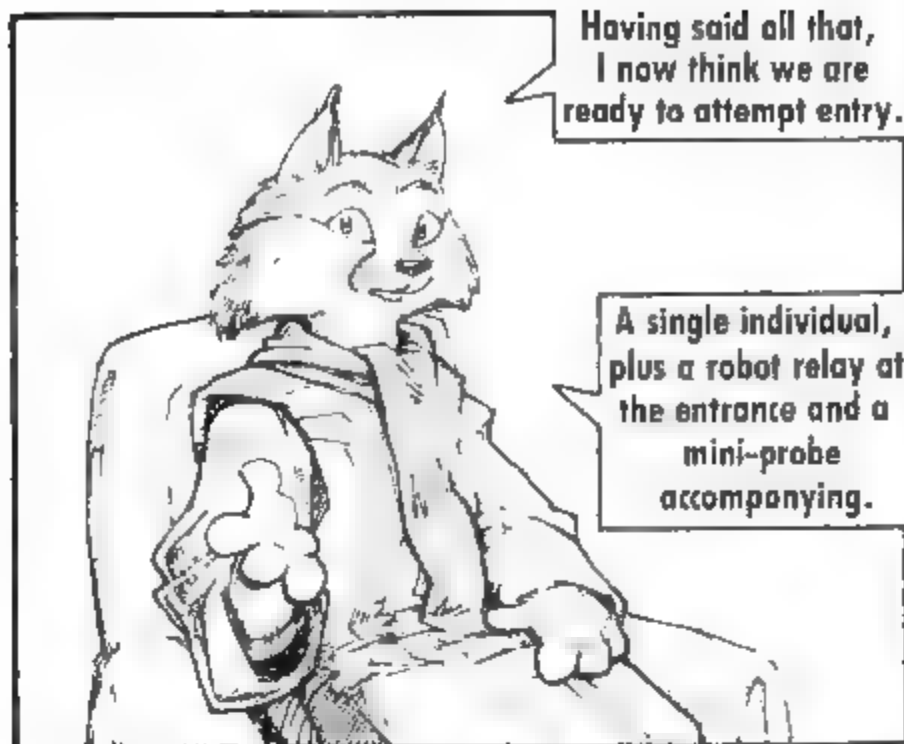
Gosh, that's an awfully
rational about-face.

That thing gives me nightmares!



I'll leave the operation entirely
to you, Dr. Kalakabahi. EDF
priorities and our own impatience
will have to wait.

Thank you Captain Shima.
I admit that I too am
anxious to get into it.



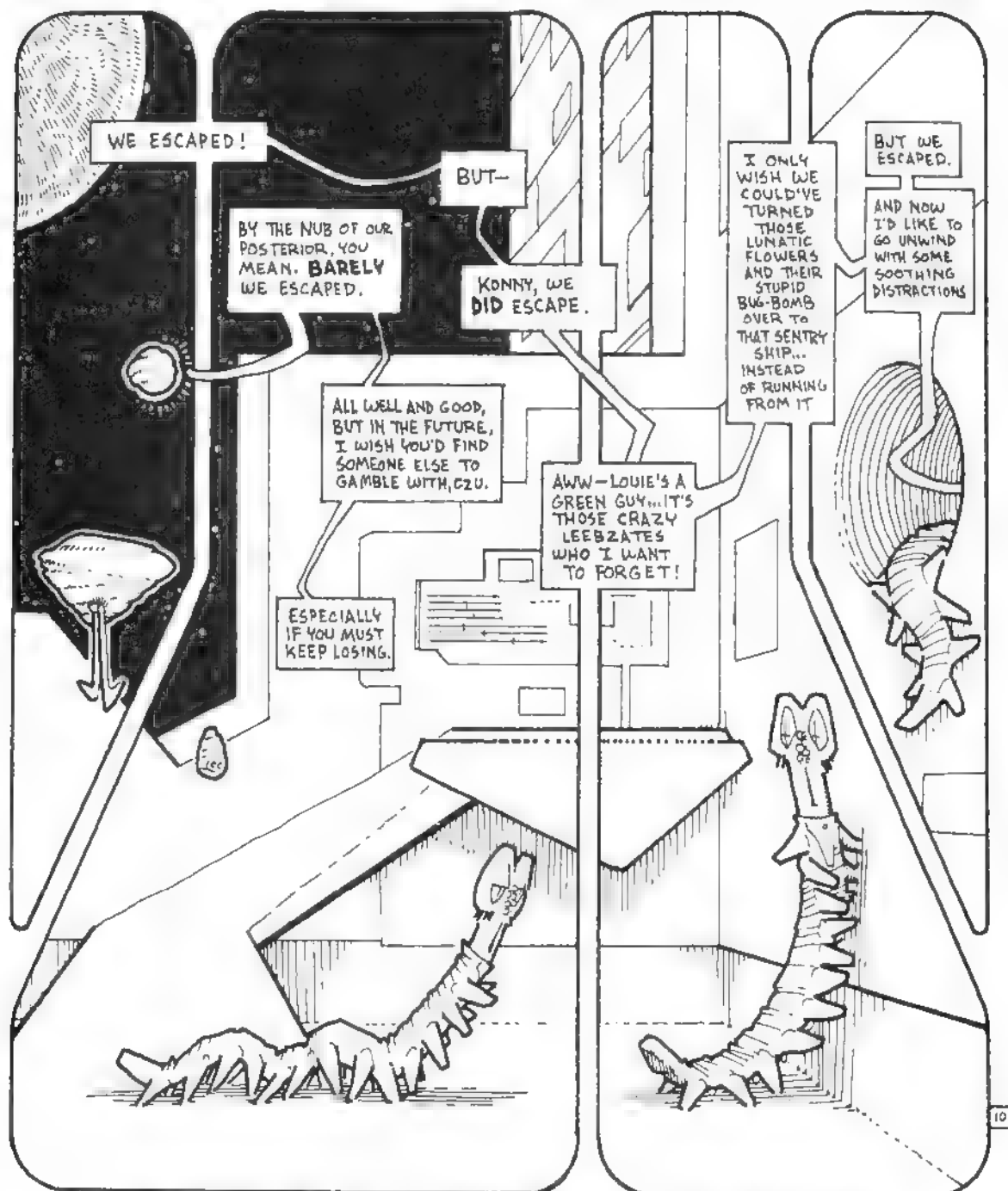
Commander Trudeau, you're the EDF Foreign Technologies Specialist, and of better use here in analysis.



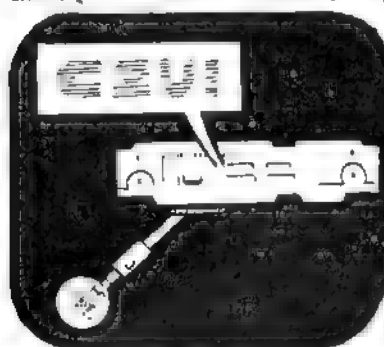


konny and czu

in DEBT CHAPTER 2

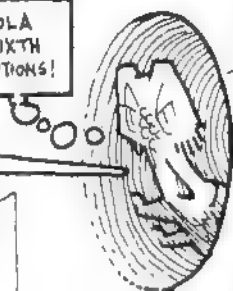


LATER (THIRTY MINUTES BY YOUR CLOCK).



OH, FLATTEN HIM !!! JUST AS OOLA WAS ABOUT TO INFLATE HER SIXTH NOSE! WHAT A TIME FOR INTERRUPTIONS!

WHAT? WHAT?
WHAT WHAT WHAT?!



I HAVE NEEDS, KONNY! AND ONE OF THEM IS TIME TO CONTEMPLATE HOW TO DEAL WITH THE REST OF MY NEEDS! MAYBE ROCKS DON'T NEED VISUAL REMINDERS OF CERTAIN FUNCTIONS, BUT ORGANICS DO!

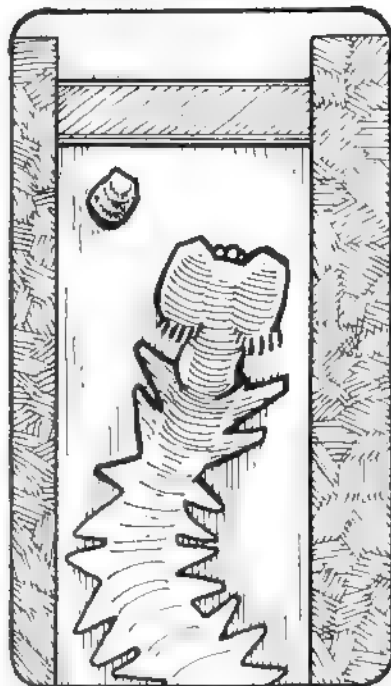
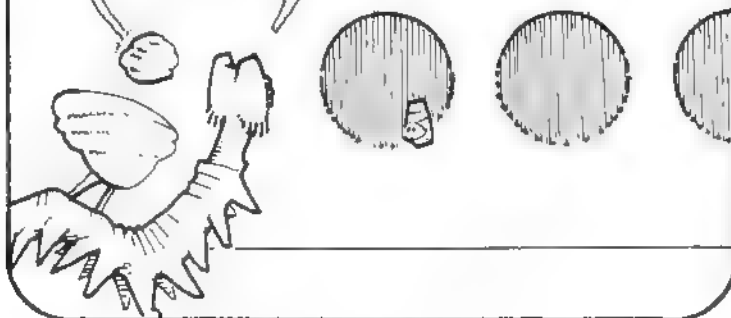


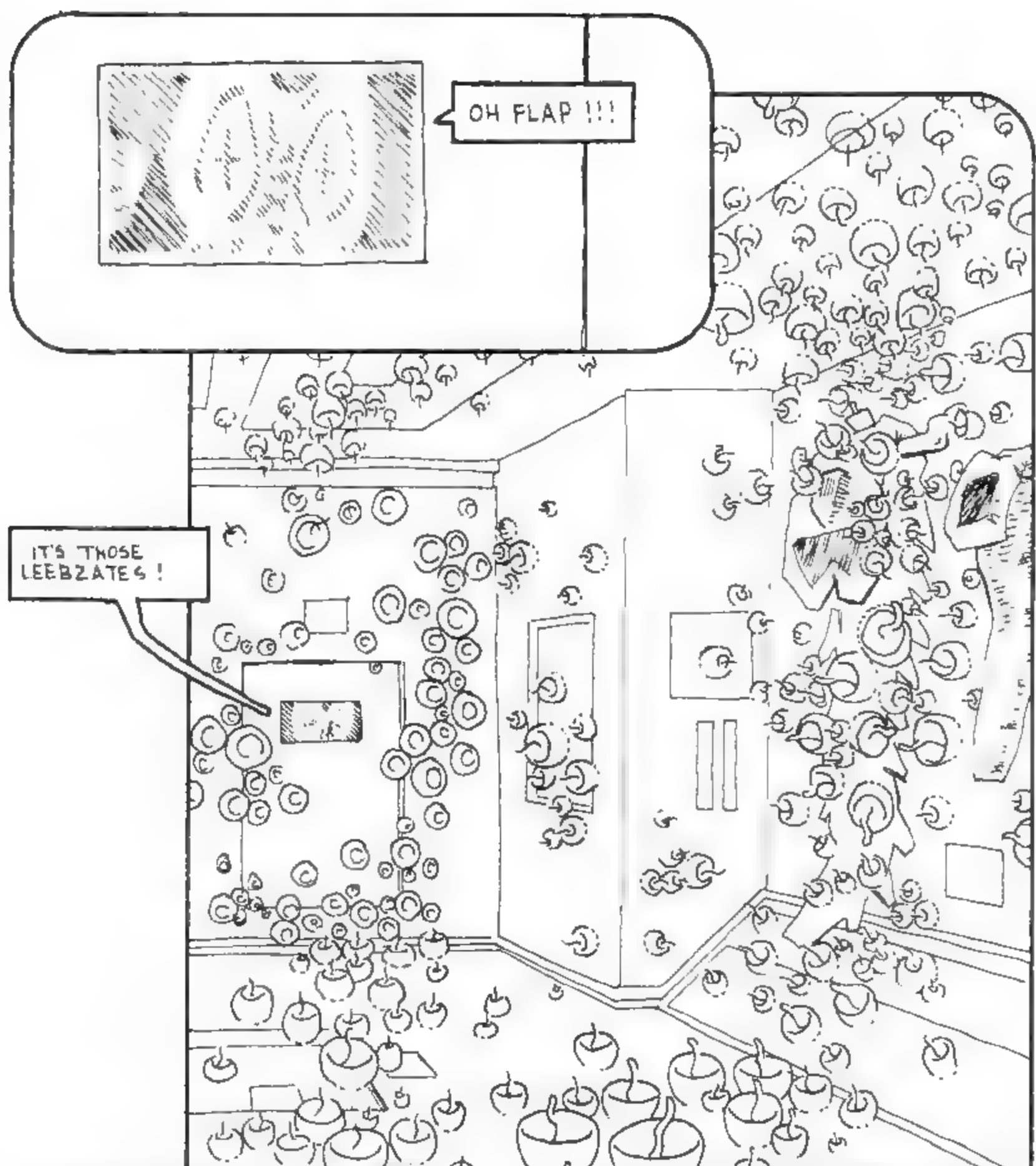
THAT'S NOT MY PROBLEM.

...BUT I HAVE FOUND SOMETHING THAT COULD BE A PROBLEM FOR US.

I SENT A SET OF MY EYES DOWN TO THE AIRLOCK ACCESS ROOM TO CHECK WHETHER OR NOT YOU PUT YOUR VAC-SUIT AWAY. I WANT YOU TO SEE THIS.

YOU DRAGGED ME AWAY FROM MY FID FOR THIS? YOU REALLY MUST BE STILL TOOLED OFF ABOUT LOUIE.





OH FLAP !!!

IT'S THOSE LEEBZATES !

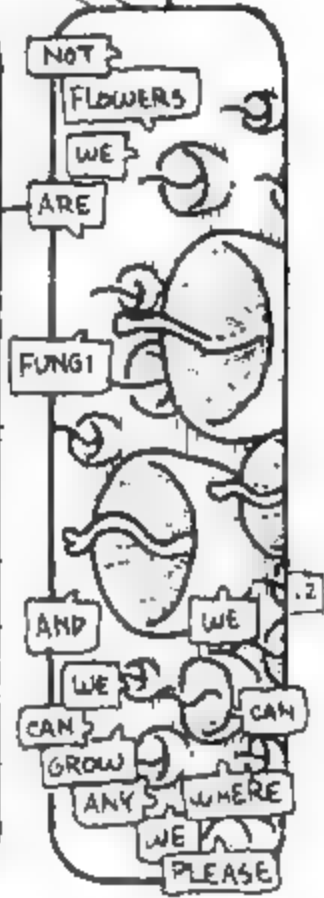


HOW DID THEY GET HERE ?

THEY'RE GROWING ON YOUR VAC-SUIT, NOT MINE.

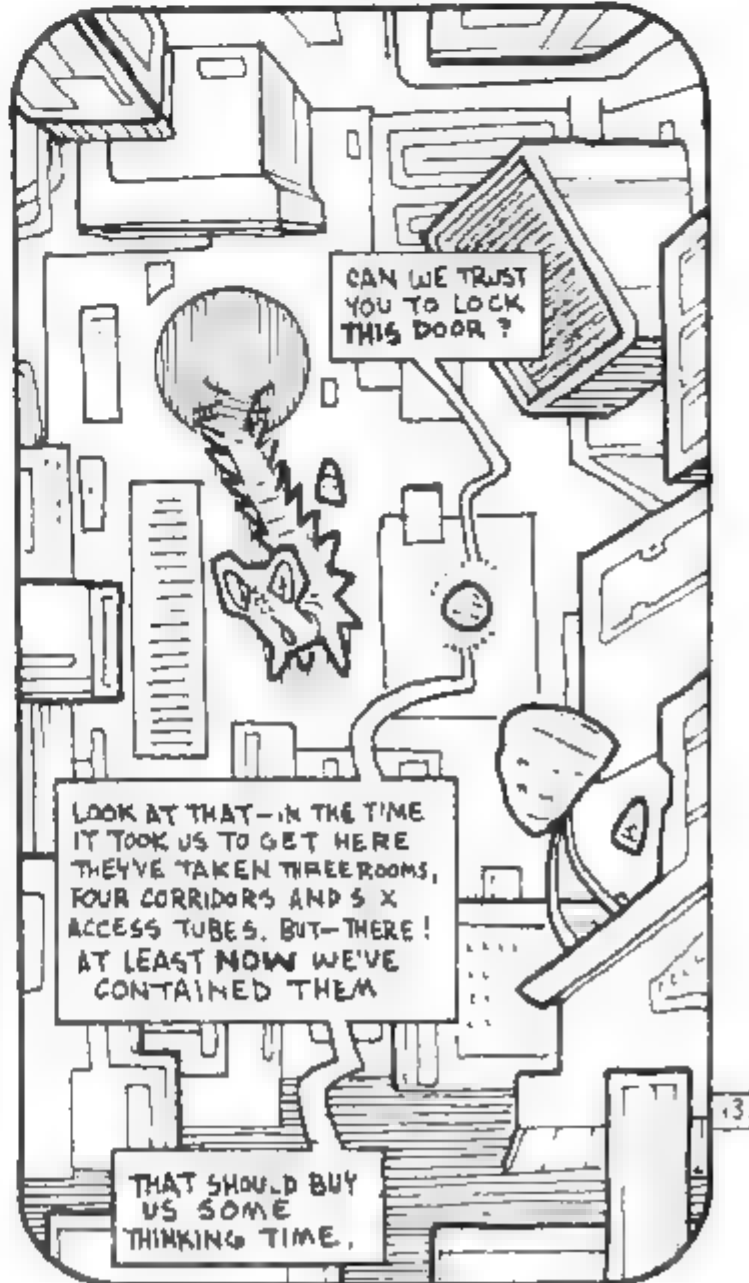
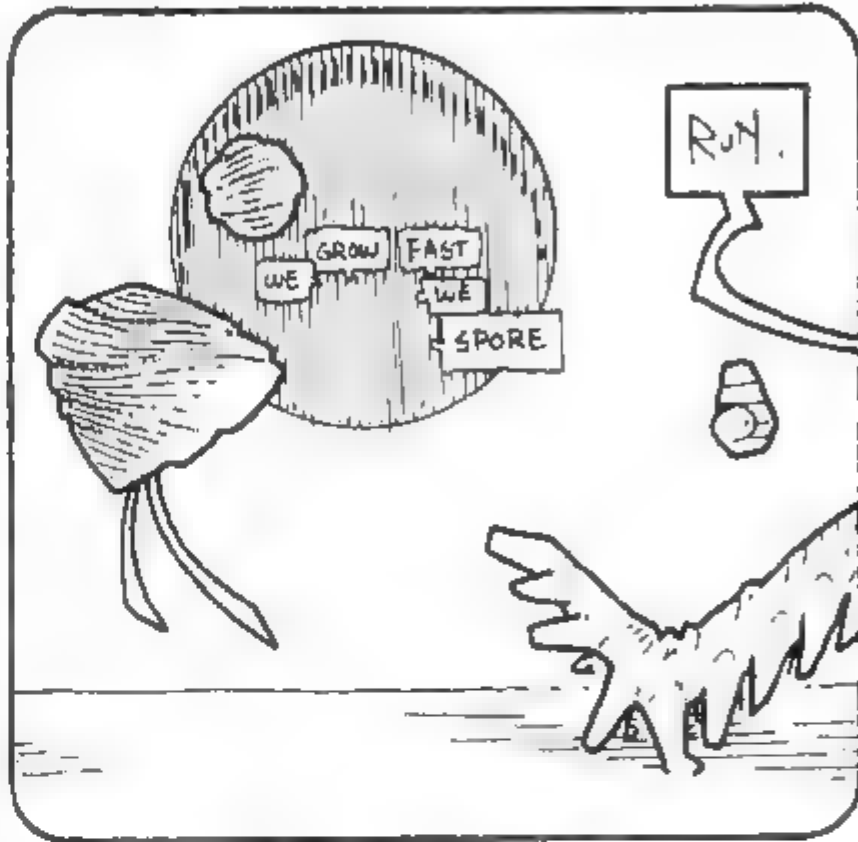
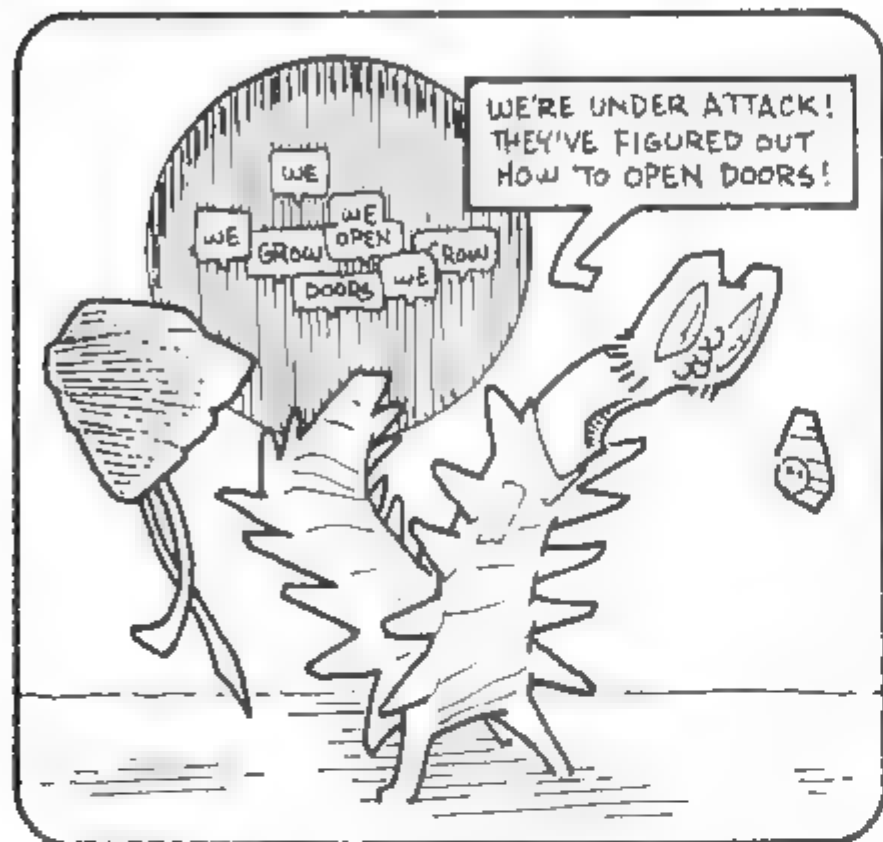
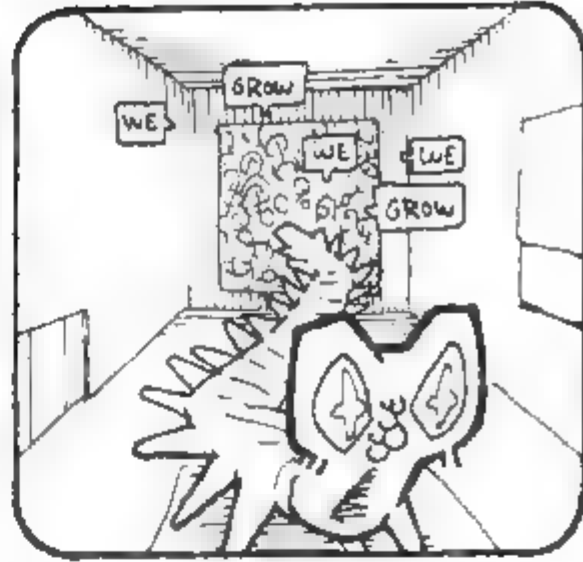
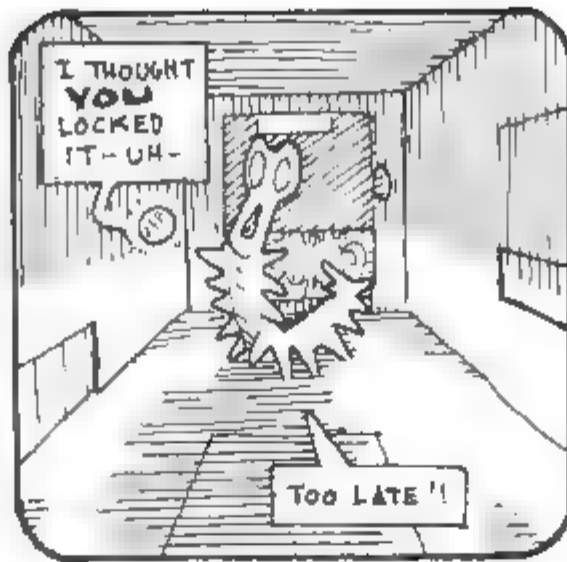
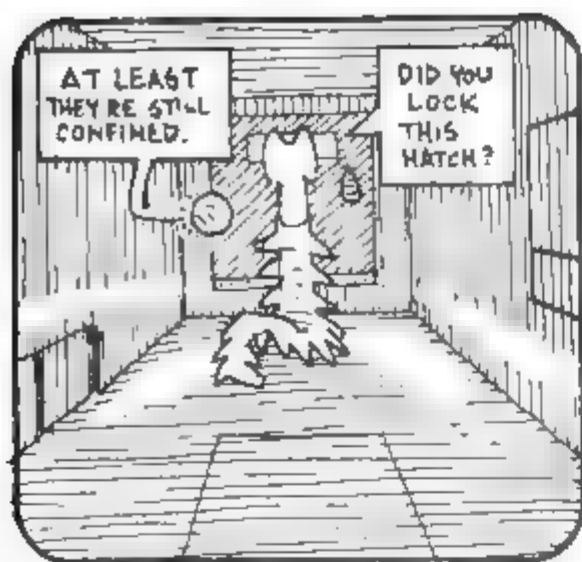


HEY IN THERE' YOU CRAZY FLOWERS CAN'T GROW HERE!



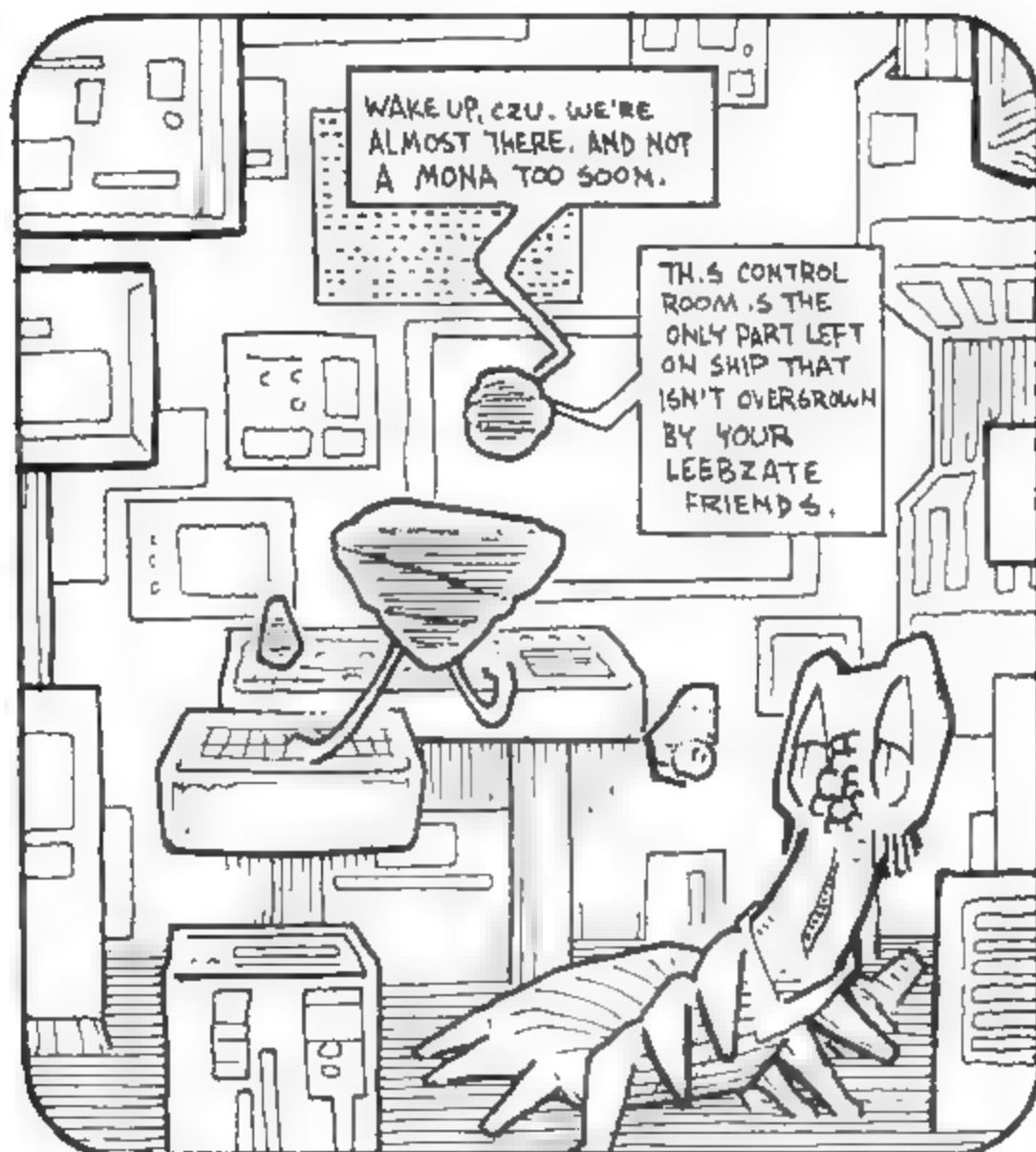
NOT FLOWERS WE ARE FUNGI

AND WE CAN GROW ANY WHERE WE PLEASE



TIME IS PASSED,
DISTANCE IS SPANNED,
GROUND IS LOST.

THEY'VE
TAKEN THE
SAUNA!
AUGH!!

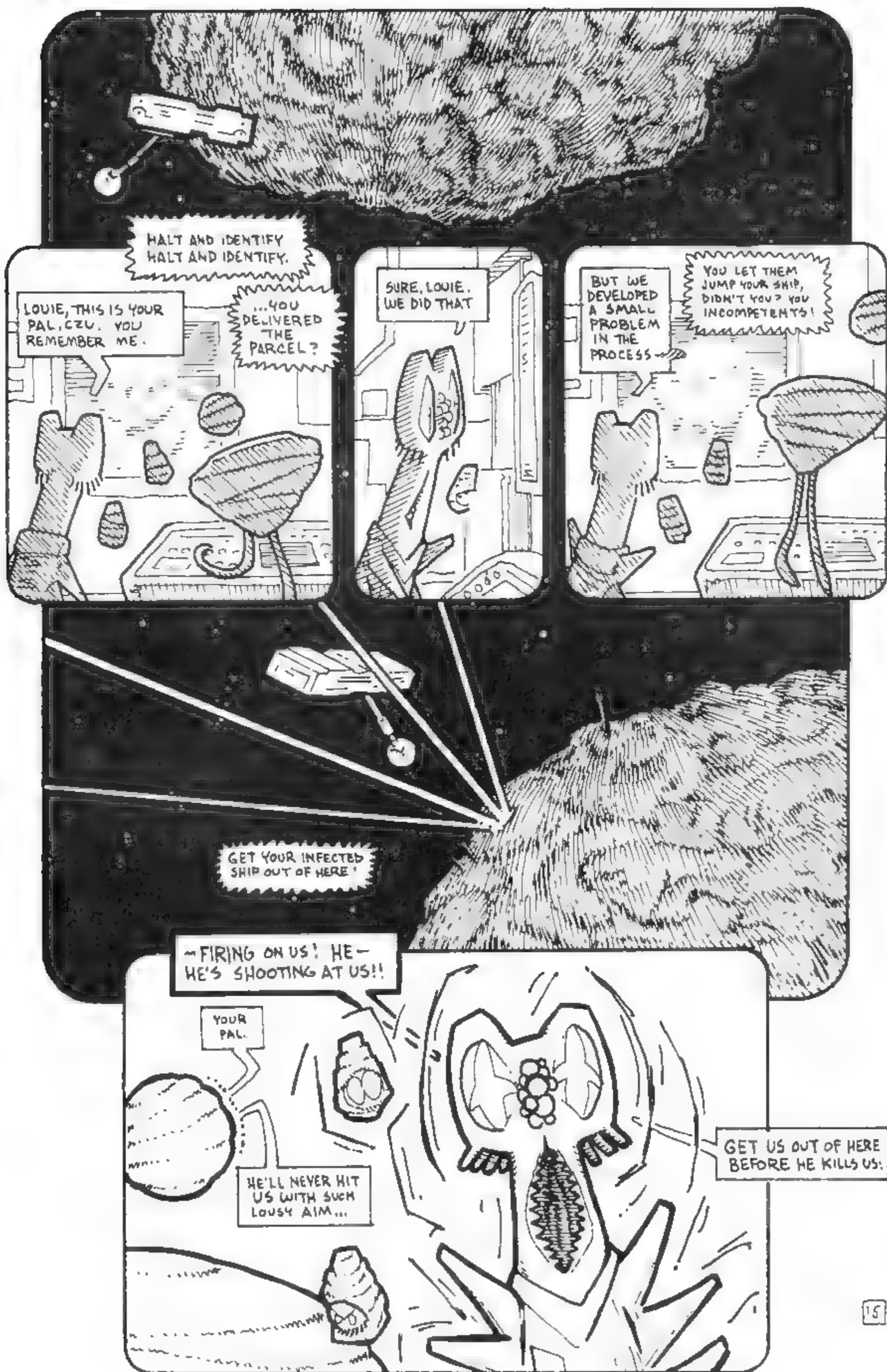


AWW, KONNY, DON'T GIVE ME THAT
LOOK— I'M SORRY MY GAMBLING
GOT US IN THIS MESS. I'M TRYING
HARD AS I CAN TO GET US OUT
OF IT, REALLY. AND YES, I KNOW
YOU AREN'T FOND OF BIG LOUIE...

BUT LOUIE'S THE ONLY ONE WE DARE ASK
FOR HELP. THE PORT AUTHORITY MIGHT SAVE
US, BUT THEY'D ALSO THROW US IN JAIL FOR
PICKING UP THE LEEBZATES ON A
RESTRICTED WORLD.

LOUIE'LL HELP US
OUT.. IT WAS THAT
DEBT TO HIM THAT
STARTED ALL THIS

THERE'S LOUIE'S ASTEROID HIDEOUT.
I GOT US THIS FAR, CZU, BUT YOU'RE
GOING TO HAVE TO TALK TO HIM.



HALT AND IDENTIFY
HALT AND IDENTIFY.

LOUIE, THIS IS YOUR
PAL, CZU. YOU
REMEMBER ME.

...YOU
DELIVERED
THE
PARCEL?

SURE, LOUIE.
WE DID THAT

BUT WE
DEVELOPED
A SMALL
PROBLEM
IN THE
PROCESS

YOU LET THEM
JUMP YOUR SHIP,
DIDN'T YOU? YOU
INCOMPETENTS!

GET YOUR INFECTED
SHIP OUT OF HERE!

~ FIRING ON US! HE -
HE'S SHOOTING AT US!!

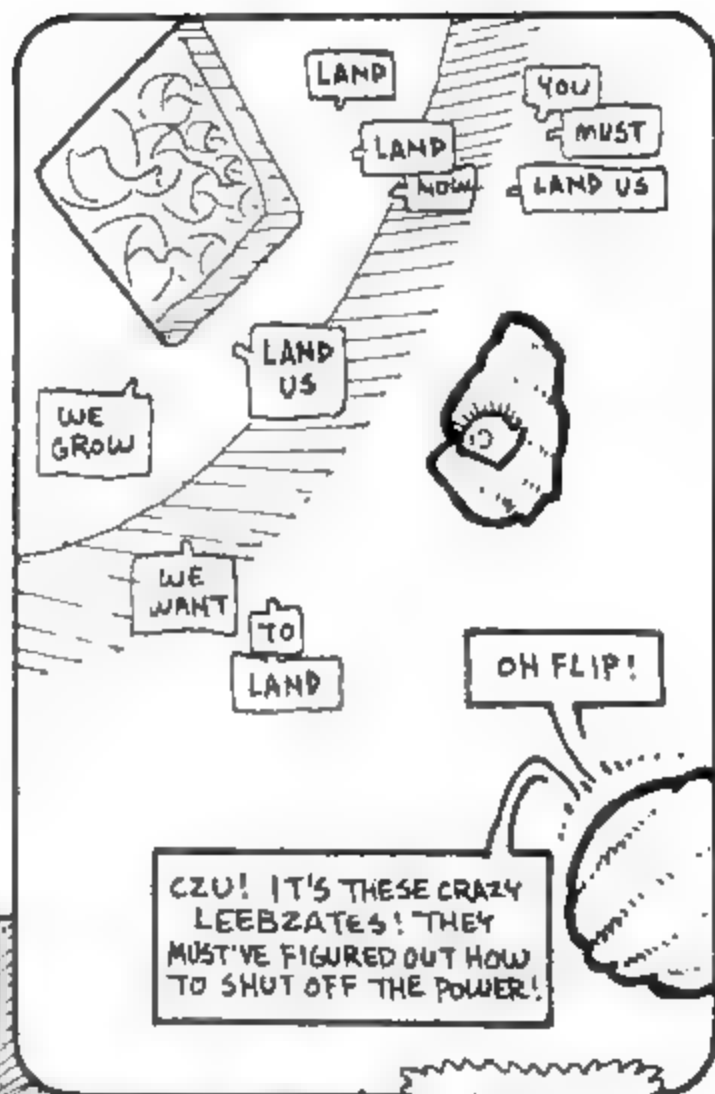
YOUR
PAL.

HE'LL NEVER HIT
US WITH SUCH
LOUSY AIM...

GET US OUT OF HERE
BEFORE HE KILLS US!



NO

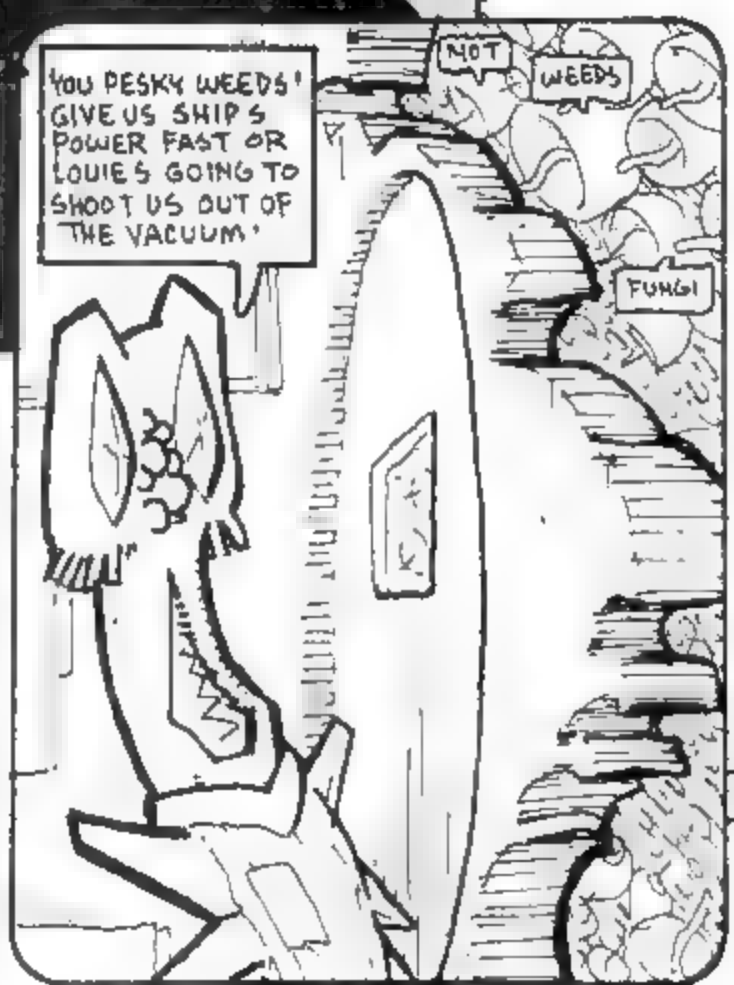


...NINE...

...EIGHT...

...SEVEN...

YOU'RE NOT MOVING!



the grapes of *RAZZ*

By Adrian
Korberman

Down in the City. It grows. It breathes. It breeds.
Corruption and vice pulse through the veins and arteries of
the Metropolis like vile blood, and violence has a half trigger.
Order is maintained solely by courage, blood-spotted
badges, punishing rounds from smoking revolvers
and me.

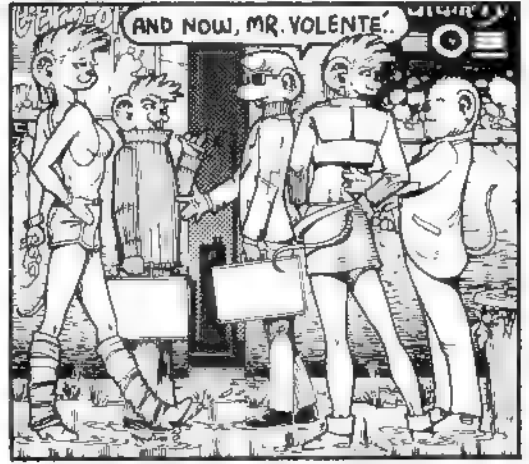
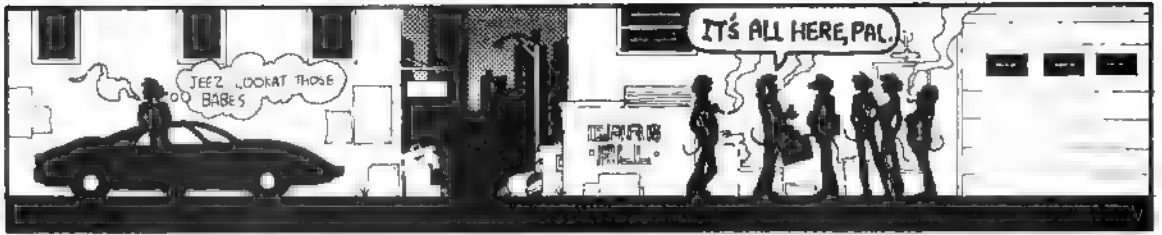
OKAY KID. WE'RE ALMOST
THERE: NOW LISSEN UP.
ME AN' DRAZEN WILL
DO THA DEAL...

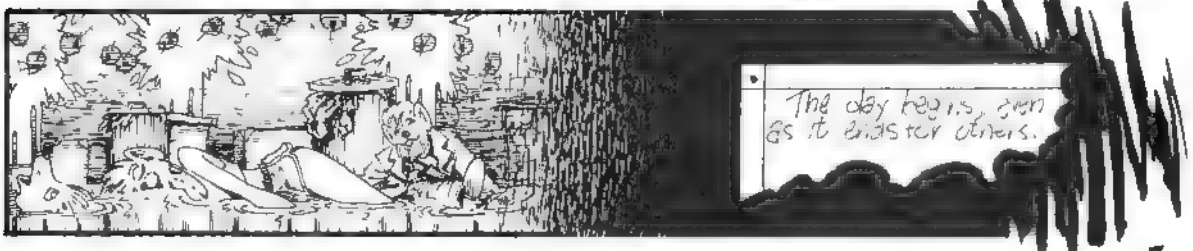
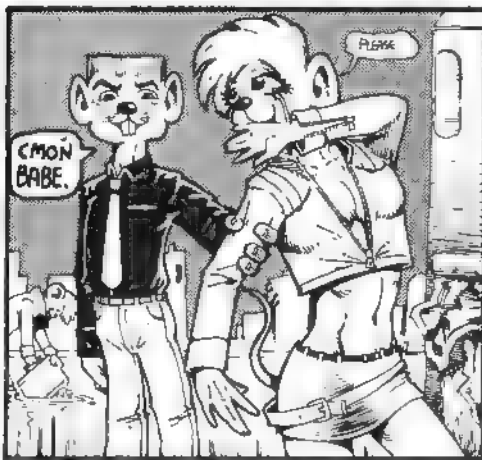
SURE, RAZZI.

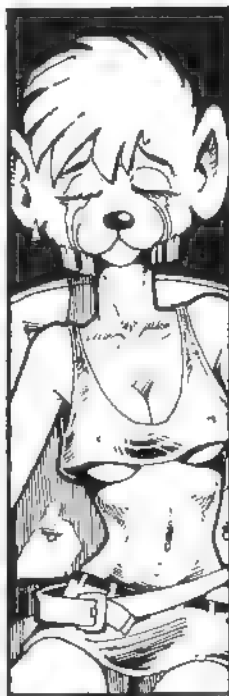
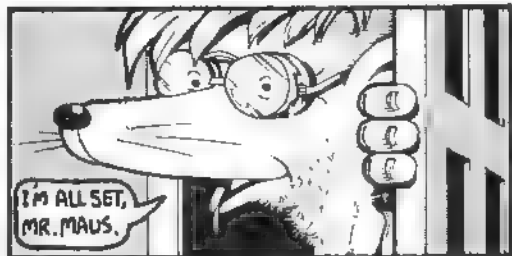
STAY BY DA CAR
AN' DON'T DO
ANYTHIN' BUT
DRIVE WHEN
I TELLYA!

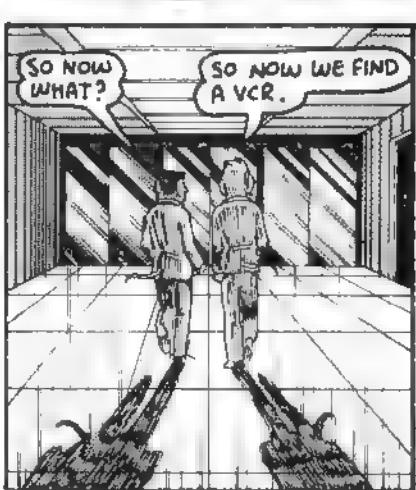
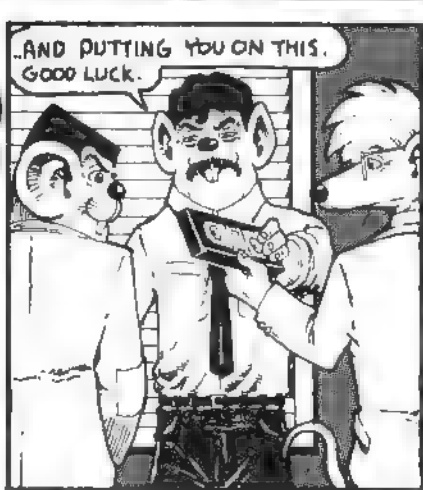
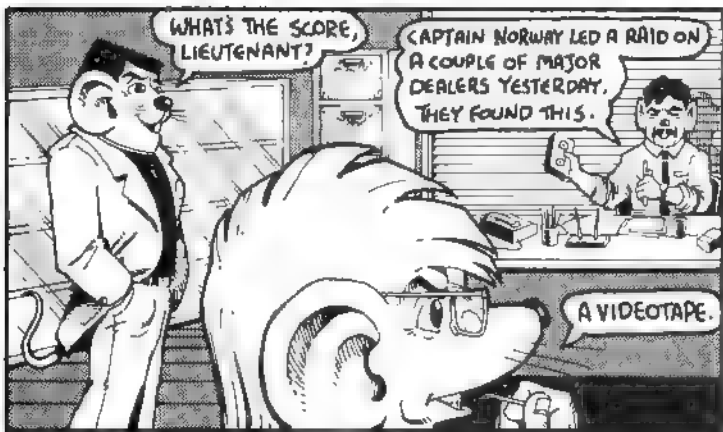
OKAY!

HERE WE ARE.
WATCH AN' LEARN,
KID.

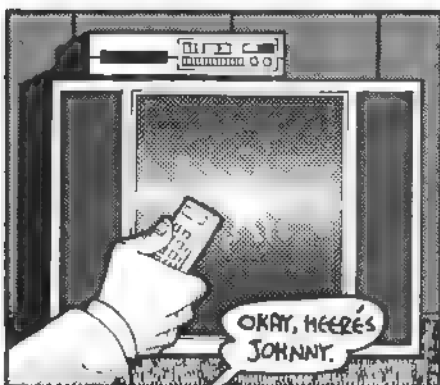


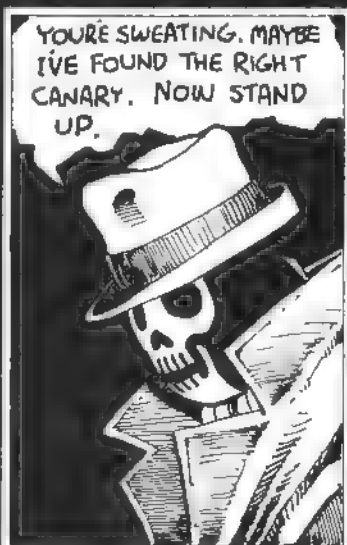
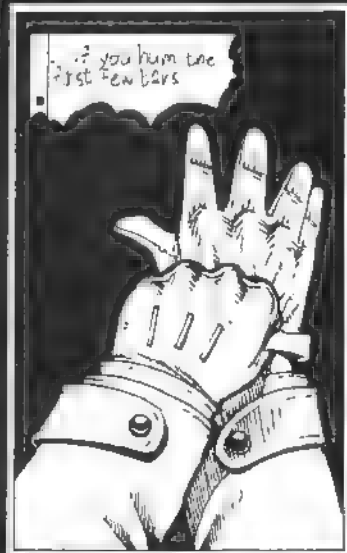
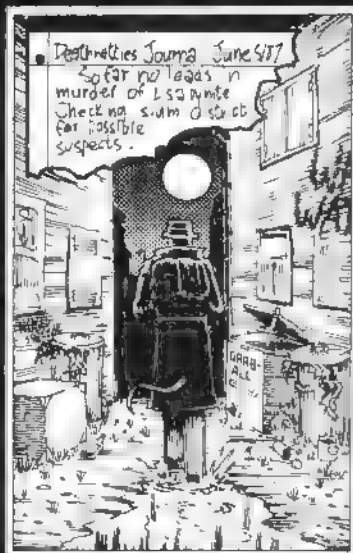


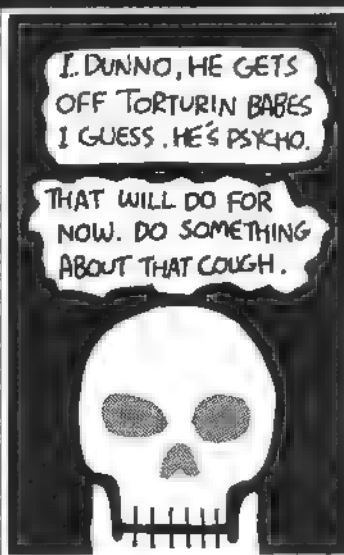
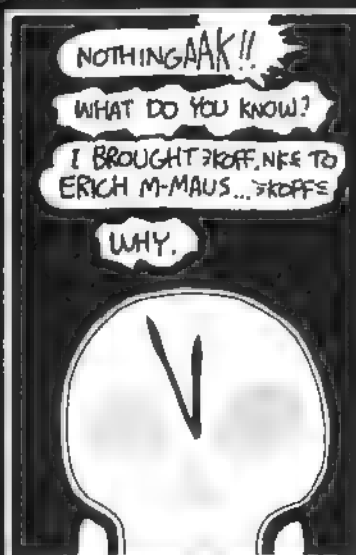
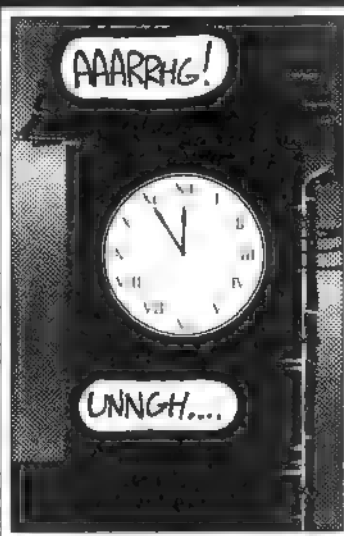
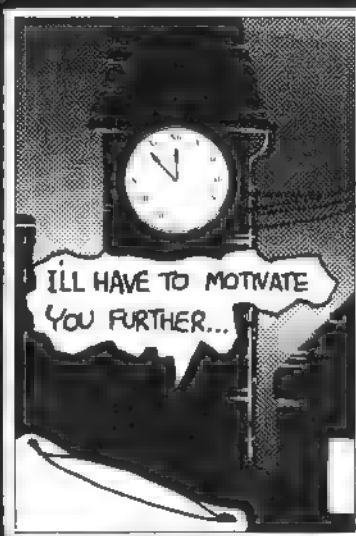


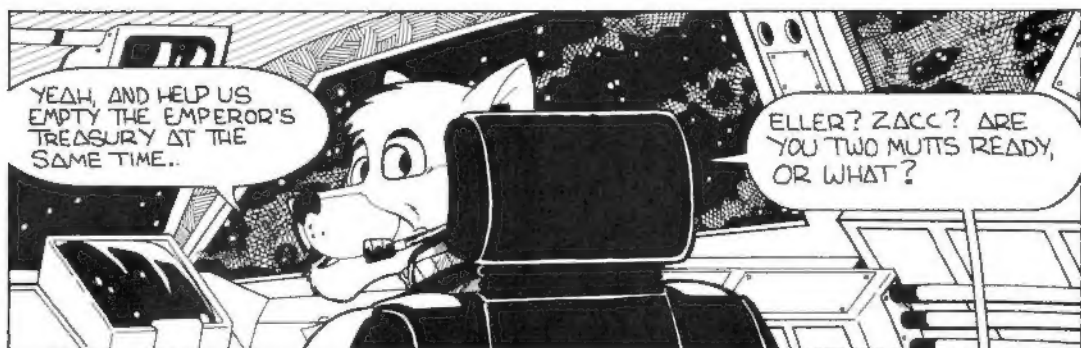








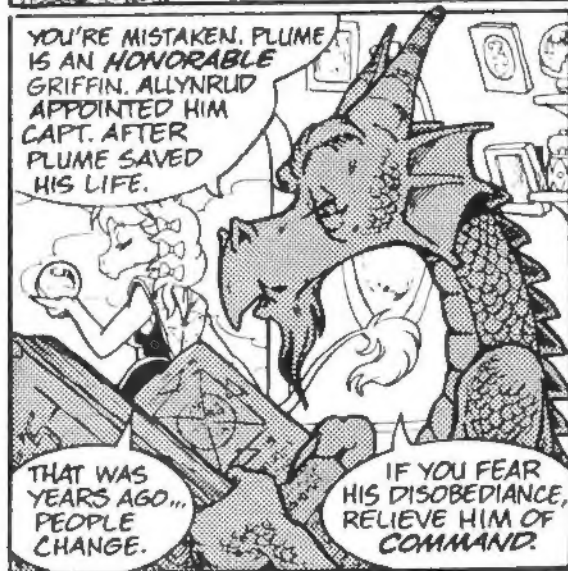




HIS NAME IS DAXTON GREYCOAT, PRINCE
TO THE THRONE OF THE PLANET NEW
ALDION, AND THE ENTIRE CANIS STAR
SYSTEM. BUT HE IS ALSO KNOWN AS
THE OUTLAW — SPACE WOLF.

THIS IS HIS STORY.

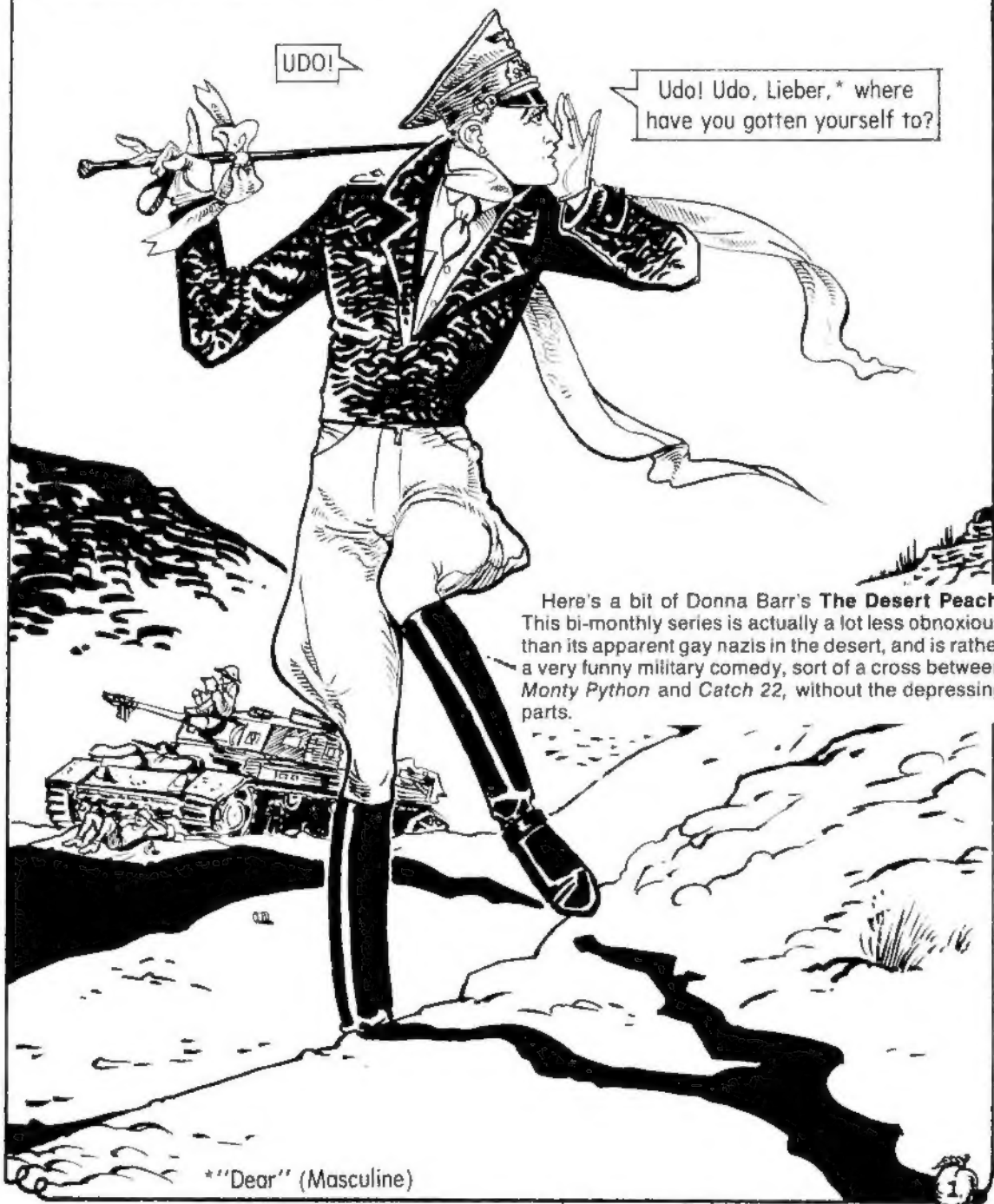
The first real episode of Dan Fiahive's **Space Wolf**
will appear in **Albedo 13**.



Vicky Wyman's *Xanadu*, an anthropomorphized romantic fantasy.

The Desert Peach

It has been said, with some justification, that the Afrika Korps was made up of free spirits. But the most free of them all, without exception, was the Desert Fox's pretty young half-brother, the Desert Peach...



Here's a bit of Donna Barr's **The Desert Peach**. This bi-monthly series is actually a lot less obnoxious than its apparent gay nazis in the desert, and is rather a very funny military comedy, sort of a cross between *Monty Python* and *Catch 22*, without the depressing parts.

**"Dear" (Masculine)

